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THE LIFE

OF

AUGUSTUS

VISCOUNT KEPPEL.

VOL. II.

THE LIFE

OF

AUGUSTUS

VISCOUNT KEPPEL,

ADMIRAL OF THE WHITE,

AND FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY IN 1782—3.

BY THE

HON^BLE & REV^D THOMAS KEPPEL,

RECTOR OF WARHAM ST. MARY, NORFOLK.

37509 a.c

"Proprium humani ingenii est, odisse, quem læseris."

TACITUS, *in vit. Agric.* c. 42.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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THE LIFE

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1775 TO 1778.

IN 1775 commenced the war with our American colonies, which has impressed so indelible a stain on the page of British history.

By no one was this unnatural conflict regarded with more abhorrence than by Admiral Keppel. While numbers of naval officers flocked to the Admiralty, offering their services, and requesting employment, Admiral Keppel kept aloof, declaring that, "If the necessities of the times called for

his services, and he knew that it was the King's desire, he was ready to do his duty, but *not in the line of America.*"

No sooner were these hostilities commenced than preparations of a warlike nature were made both by France and Spain. Their designs could not be mistaken; but no efforts were made by the British Government to counteract them until the close of the following year, when the formidable armaments in the ports of France aroused ministers from their lethargy.

Keppel, who, on the 6th of February of this year, was advanced to the rank of Vice-Admiral of the Red, received, in the month of November, a message from Lord Sandwich, delivered by Sir Hugh Palliser, stating that his Majesty requested to know whether, in case of a war with the continental powers, he would undertake the charge of the home fleet? To this he replied, that he was ready to attend and give his answer in person to his Majesty. He was accordingly admitted to a private audience, and, at the personal solicitation of the King, consented to assume the command of the Channel fleet. It was not, however, without some misgivings that he found himself about to trust his hard-earned fame to ministers whom he knew to be unfriendly towards him, and in whom he placed not the slightest confidence. These feelings were not confined to his own breast. His friend and

cousin, the Duke of Richmond, seems to have had a presentiment of the treatment he was afterwards to receive.

THE DUKE OF RICHMOND TO ADMIRAL KEPPEL.

"Goodwood, Nov. 19th, 1776.

"My dearest Admiral,—I cannot wish you joy of having a fleet to command, prepared by the Earl of Sandwich, with new men and officers, unacquainted with each other, to risk your reputation and the fate of your country upon, against a French and Spanish fleet, who are, I fear, much better prepared. At the same time, I confess I do not see how you could refuse your service. Let me, however, advise you to insist upon your own terms. No one can be surprised that you should suspect a minister, whom you have constantly opposed, of not giving you all the help he might do to a friend, without suspecting him of treachery. If he has but a bad fleet to send out, 'tis doing Lord Sandwich no injustice to suppose he would be glad to put it under the command of a man whom he does not love, and yet whose name will justify the choice to the nation. If we meet with a misfortune, he hopes to get off:—he was not to blame for having given the command to a relation or friend. He chose the man the nation called for. He hopes to secure himself against the attacks of opposition, because he hopes to blend himself with

you in the operations carrying on, and if blame is to be borne, he will endeavour, by every art he is but too much master of, to throw it on your shoulders. I would advise you to have the condition of each ship examined by your own officers, and assented to by the Admiralty, in writing. I would insist upon having so many seamen to each ship, and the most distinct and clear orders before I went to sea.

" Your own judgment will enable you to weigh these and other considerations much better than any body else can possibly do, and how far you have a right to be indulged in the nomination of the man next in command to you, and other officers ; only be assured that the more peremptory and exact you are in every particular now, the safer and easier you will be hereafter. I would determine not to trust Lord Sandwich for a piece of ropeyarn, but have the most authentic returns in due form.

" God bless you ! Pardon my impertinent zeal, and believe me ever,

" Your most affectionate,

" humble servant,

" RICHMOND, &c."

The Admiral's services were, however, not required at present.

Another year elapsed, distinguished from the

preceding only by an increase of the atrocious cruelties perpetrated in this war.

Admiral Keppel had, in the meanwhile, held himself in readiness for active employment. He was, however, left unnoticed and unconsulted, even as to the equipment of the fleet which the Admiralty were supposed to be preparing for his command. He appears to have sensibly felt this slight. Writing to Lord Rockingham from Bath, on the 14th of January, he says:—

"Most probably the K— will have no want of my services, and the seeming indifference of his M—— towards me, since the first moment of my having been given to understand I might be called upon, I think, makes it advisable for me to keep out of town, which may help to shew my indifference towards them in return.

"The Bishop of Exeter* is at Windsor, and Sir Thomas Miller† will be got to town by a note from any of our friends known to him, or a civil line from yourself.

"If the Duke of Manchester should be in town you will, of course, see him. You know he is tolerably informed upon foreign matters. I wish he may not think that on those subjects you don't attend enough to his intelligence. I know you will excuse my taking the liberty to hint this.

* The Admiral's brother.

† Brother to Anne, Countess of Albemarle.

"Now for a word for your lieutenant; as to his being in the Victory, should I hoist my flag, I do assure you that your wishes would have the preference to every other person, and you should not have had the trouble of asking it; but I thought it, of all others, a situation very unfit for the young man, greatly too inactive; and in regard to advancement, not very promising. He cannot do better—he cannot do so well—as by depending upon Sir Hugh Palliser to put him forward. Perhaps he means him for one of his own officers. Should he be placed with me, Sir Hugh will have done with him; now, should Sir Hugh's interest fail, and ours get better, he will be sure of help in a proper way, which is having a double chance. As I have now engaged myself, I cannot take him; but if I could, I should recommend his not accepting my offer. Employment in an active ship is the most proper for him, on his first advancement to a commission. I flatter myself my reasons will convince his friends so as to give them content. I am sure your Lordship will not imagine I am making excuses that are not sincere, because to yourself beyond every other friend I always speak straightforward.

"I am, my dear Lord,

"Most faithfully,

"Your sincere, humble servant,

"A. KEPPEL."

In a letter to Lord Rockingham, dated "Bath, March 2nd, 1777," he writes:

"Surely the matters on the American side of the water wear a black and dismal aspect. Loss of men, money, and credit, seem to be all that has hitherto been the fate of this once proud and flourishing nation;—but yet it does not seem felt by the generality of people. The country is infatuated.

"The Bishop of Exeter gets better, but it is by very slow degrees. He has certainly been very bad, and delayed too long in coming to Bath, and taking Dr. Moysey's assistance.

"I am, my dear Lord,

"Most faithfully, &c.,

"A. KEPPEL."

The opening of parliament on the 18th of November, 1777, was marked by speeches of more than usual acrimony in both houses, and on both sides. In the House of Lords, the address, in answer to the King's speech, called forth a warm debate, in which Lord Chatham, after condemning the war with that vehement eloquence for which he was so pre-eminently distinguished, reflected, in the strongest terms, on the defenceless state of the nation. "What, my Lords," he exclaimed—"what is the present state of this nation? It is big with difficulty and danger; it is full of the most destructive circumstances: I say, my Lords, it is truly

perilous. What are these little islands,—Great Britain and Ireland? What is your defence?—Nothing! What is the condition of your formidable and inveterate enemies, the two leading branches in the House of Bourbon? They have a formidable navy. I say, my Lords, their intention is hostile. I know it. Their coasts are lined with troops, from the furthermost part of the coast of Spain up to Dunkirk. What have you to oppose them? Not five thousand men in this island, nor more in Ireland; nor above twenty ships of the line, fully and sufficiently manned, that any Admiral's reputation would permit to take the command of."

Lord Sandwich, in reply, declared "that the noble Earl had been misinformed, or grossly deceived; that there were then forty-two ships of the line in commission in Great Britain, thirty-five of which were completely manned, and fit for sea at a moment's notice. The noble Earl asked, after giving a deplorable account of our navy, with what justice I leave with your Lordships now to determine, where is the man of reputation in his profession who would stake his credit on any naval force we are able to send out? I will answer his Lordship, that there is such a man (Admiral Keppel) to be found, who knows the present state of the navy, and is ready to stake his credit on the issue, and willing to meet the enemies of this country, if any such there be—as brave, gallant, and experienced

an officer—as respectably connected, and as nobly allied, as any in the service—a man in whom the noble Lord himself would wish to confide, and of whom he entertains the most exalted opinion."

Lord Shelburne, in an able speech, contradicted the assertion that Keppel was ready to stake his reputation on the fleet which Lord Sandwich could produce. "The noble Lord," he remarked, "I think, with great justice, has passed the highest eulogiums on a certain great naval officer. I believe that not one of your Lordships entertains a second opinion of the professional and personal merit of that great man. But, in his Lordship's zeal, I fear he has promised more for the Admiral than he would wish to be responsible for. He says, that officer is ready and willing to stake his reputation, as a professional man, on the present state of the British navy, in the event of a rupture with France and Spain. I question it. Is that gallant officer thoroughly informed of the whole of the arrangement so pompously described by the noble Lord? Does he know and approve of the officers who are to serve under him and co-operate with him? Do the inferior arrangements meet with his approbation? In short, is everything which creates confidence in an officer of judgment and experience perfectly within his knowledge? I answer, these things cannot be; and for this reason,—if the public prints are to be depended

upon, that gentleman has been for a considerable time out of the kingdom; he has been at Spa, for the recovery of his health. I know with what industry these reports have been circulated for some time past; and, I know too, to borrow a phrase from a great military officer, (General Burgoyne,) that there is a physical impossibility that they can be true. I grant, if the noble Earl is contented with the concession, that the officer alluded to is too gallant and brave, too full of military honour and personal spirit, to decline any service, when called upon by the interests of his country, in repelling the attacks of its natural and inveterate enemies." After highly eulogizing Lord Howe, he added: "These two officers, men of such transcendant desert, were passed by, neglected and insulted; they were denied their rank; but nothing could quench the noble ardour they retained for the glory and interests of their country. In this sense: that one of them has accepted of a command, that the other is ready whenever called upon, I am willing to believe; but that either one or both, were or are willing to stake their credit on the issue, is what I can never be persuaded to assent to."

In the course of the debate, a Minister of the Crown declared, that those who differed from ministers were enemies to their country. This again brought forward the name of Keppel. The Duke of Grafton said: "Nothing, my Lords, can

be more unparliamentary than the assumption, that every man who differs from administration is an enemy to his country. It is used only to answer the temporary purposes of debate; the very gallant naval officer, Admiral Keppel, who has been so often mentioned this night, is a striking instance of it. It is no secret to the noble Lords in office that that gentleman highly disapproves of the present unnatural civil war. He has frequently given a public testimony of his disapprobation, and has supported his opinion by his vote as a senator. How the noble Earl at the head of the naval department will reconcile his opinions with his conduct, I do not pretend to say; but it is somewhat remarkable that this fleet, which has been so highly extolled, on which it is acknowledged the salvation of this country so entirely depends, should be trusted to a person who, according to the current ministerial language of this House, must be deemed 'an enemy to his country.'"

The discussions in parliament, and the warlike preparations of France and Spain, made it evident that the principal states of Europe could not much longer be exempt from a participation in hostilities, which, hitherto, had been confined to our colonies. Steps were now taken by the English government for collecting officers and seamen for manning the navy. But, while all these preparations for the equipment of a fleet were in progress, the person

destined to its chief command was left to draw his own conclusions as to the probability of his services being required.

ADMIRAL KEPPEL TO LORD ROCKINGHAM.

"Friday, January 2nd, 1778.

"My dear Lord,—I understand from an officer, who called here yesterday, that the Admiralty have ordered letters to be wrote, or adopted some other mode, to acquaint the lieutenants upon half-pay that they must appear, and take up commissions to such ships as the Lords appoint them to. I apprise you of this, that young Farrer may be advised to lose no time in making his appearance. He is so lately made an officer, that the Admiralty would have less difficulty in dismissing him the service, if he neglects appearing, than punishing an old officer. You cannot doubt my taking the young gentleman, it being your wish, as one of my lieutenants, the moment I have an opening; but, that there may be no objection to him, he must conduct himself, till I can receive him, properly, and as other officers do upon the present summons. I can't guess that he can have a reasonable excuse to keep back from service at this time. Be assured, my dear Marquis, that a recommendation from you will always take place of all others, if not before engaged.

"I am, most truly,

"Your sincere humble servant,

"A. Keppel."

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

"London, January 7th, 1778.

"My dear Marquis,—The times are big with distress and danger; and though, perhaps, I ought not to allow myself to be fearful, yet am I full of alarm and uneasiness for my country, for my friends, and for myself. I have been told that, although every hour may be, nay, is, productive of matter not to be neglected, that the different Ministers are separated at their different villas. The long recess of Parliament seems now productive of every evil, and is, in my poor opinion, a most impeachable matter. I enclose you the produce of last night's troubled mind, and am most truly yours,

"A. Keppel."

"In case America and France join in war against England—

"The West India islands seem an object pointed out to the Americans, which, undoubtedly, they will not neglect; and, if assisted by the French, I am unable to judge how they are to be secured against an attack skilfully planned and conducted. How to protect our fisheries afterwards is not easy to determine. Our distant East India possessions, I fear, cannot be protected. The defence of England and Ireland, with Gibraltar, (which latter would be valuable to protect our Mediterranean trade,) is all my poor judgment allows me to expect. This being the probable state of what must ensue, what a

dangerous situation do honest men get into that lend themselves to direct the public councils from this moment!

"It is said that France has signed, with Messrs. Franklin and Deane, a treaty of commerce with America. If true, it is little less than a declaration of war. It would, however insulting and humiliating, be imprudent now to resent it, unless there was a tempting object to be struck, that would be felt by France in the beginning of the war. Objects should be considered and looked after, as well relating to Spain as France.

"The treaty of commerce mentioned, must, I think, require being ratified by the American Congress before it can be finally binding, unless it is a trade only, agreed upon for the convenience of the present moment. The measure, under any description, seems to point out most clearly the necessity of calling the forces from the continent of North America. Orders should, without loss of time, be sent to call them away, declaring to the Congress the determination of leaving them to their own consideration, and meaning no further hostilities towards them, but a wish to accommodate upon mutual advantages. In short, some step of this sort should be taken. It might, perhaps, interrupt the union of the Congress and Colonies, and create dissension, and, at least, produce something not altogether French. If old commissioners are improper for this business, a

fresh commission should instantly follow the above declaration.

" The ships and troops directed to leave America should directly be reinforced with five ships of the line from hence, of the least draught of water, and Lord Howe should be directed, when he has embarked the troops, to despatch two ships of the line and two frigates to Jamaica, with at least 1500 troops. The same sea force and troops to the Leeward Islands. With the rest of the fleet and army, he should proceed to Europe, and endeavour to make Ireland, where he should be ordered to land such a proportion of his army as, upon consideration, may be thought a wise measure; and after landing the troops, as directed by his instructions, to lose no time in proceeding up the English Channel, to Spithead, unless his Lordship gets intelligence, whilst in Ireland, that a fleet of the enemy, superior to the one he commands, is cruising in his track to interrupt him. In such case, he will do well to remain in Ireland till he can obtain instructions from the King's Ministers how to proceed.

" *Naval Force at Home.*

" Thirty-five ships already declared fit for immediate service.

" Seven in great forwardness.

" Five now commissioned,—three months backward of the five ships immediately preceding.

" Six ordered to be fitted to relieve them: these

may be reckoned two months or six weeks backward of the five just commissioned.

"The five ships I propose to be sent to Lord Howe will reduce the home force to thirty ships, but will soon be thirty-seven. With this force, I think five ships should be kept at Plymouth, with a rear-admiral in constant readiness to proceed, victualled for foreign service, and a frigate attached to this squadron. Besides the squadron with the rear-admiral, two or three ships should be kept in readiness to send with despatches.

"Every ship not commissioned should be forwarded with all despatch, and every frigate adapted to the service of sailing should be obtained.

"Stores of every kind should be considered, and got in as fast as they can be purchased."

The affairs of Great Britain had now assumed a most alarming aspect. General Burgoyne and the whole of his army had been taken prisoners by the Americans. To complete our embarrassments, France, who, to use the words of Lord Chatham, "had been watching the conduct of our Cabinet, and waiting the maturity of her errors," entered into a treaty with our revolted colonies, which was signed at Paris on the 6th of February of this year.

The notification of this compact produced no immediate declaration of hostilities, but both na-

tions made active preparations for war. The French collected a large fleet at Brest, and dispatched bodies of troops from the interior to the coast, in order to distract the attention of the British Government, and at the same time to alarm them with the fear of an invasion. England, in the meanwhile, called out her militia. Camps were formed at different parts of the kingdom, and the whole country was put in a posture of defence. But our chief reliance was placed upon the Channel fleet, of which Admiral Keppel was now at length summoned to take the command.

When called upon to serve in 1776, the Admiral had requested the Admiralty to have the Victory got ready for his flag. In a letter addressed to Lord Sandwich, dated "Audley Square, 10th of March, 1778," he writes :—

"My Lord,—Since I had the honour of conversing with your Lordship upon the equipment of the victory, I recollected that I had omitted giving you my thoughts upon the heavy guns that have been usually put on board ships of the first rate, and which I wish to propose to your Lordship being of a lesser size.

"At present the lower deck guns carry a ball of 42lbs. A gun carrying a ball of 32lbs. weight seems, to my poor judgment, preferable on many accounts.

"First,—Because it may, on board a ship, be fired much oftener than a larger gun.

"Secondly,—Because the lesser guns may be used in service at particular times, when guns of 42lbs. ball cannot be managed at all, and the smaller gun will admit of being traversed more fore and aft.

"Thirdly,—Because it will be a considerable ease to a ship at sea.

"And fourthly,—Because almost every sea officer of rank that I have conversed with on the matter agrees with these opinions most thoroughly.

"I am, therefore, my Lord, very desirous that the gun carrying a 32lb. ball should be directed and established as the lower tier of guns on board the Victory.

"I have the honour to be, with much respect,

"Your Lordship's

"Most obedient and humble servant,

"A. KEPPEL."

It is worthy of remark, that Keppel's suggestion was adopted, and ships of the first rate have ever since carried 32-pounders on their lower decks.

On the 22nd of March, Keppel received his instructions and commission as Commander-in-chief of the Channel Fleet. The letter which follows is of same date as his appointment:—

ADMIRAL KEPPEL TO LORD ROCKINGHAM.

"MY DEAR LORD,—I was unable to call upon you this morning before my leaving town. I wished

it much, though it would have been only for a friendly conversation of no concern but to myself.

"The very important charge I am called to, in the command of the fleet, you will easily believe, causes much anxiety upon my mind. It operates in many ways; among others, the good opinion the country in general expresses towards me, gives to them expectations, I fear, much beyond my poor abilities to perform. My zeal and exertion is all I can promise, as long as my health will permit me to be in active service. I have not complained much, although I have been unwell for this last week. The quiet of Bagshot, for one day, will, I hope, set me up a little. I mean to leave this Tuesday morning, about six o'clock, for Portsmouth; and unless something unforeseen happens to prevent me, I think it probable that I may be in town Saturday or Sunday.

"My respects attend the Marchioness. I am, ever most truly, my dear Lord,

"Your obedient and humble servant,

"A. KEPPEL.

"Bagshot, March 22nd, 1778."

Two days after the date of this letter, Admiral Keppel proceeded to Portsmouth; and, as the Victory was not yet ready to receive him, hoisted his flag on board the Prince George. But, instead of the noble fleet he had been led to expect, there were only six ships of the line in any degree fit for ser-

vice, a great scarcity of sailors, and an almost total deficiency of stores and provisions.

This state of things tallied neither with the declaration of the Prime Minister, who a month before had boasted that "the navy was never in greater strength," nor with that of the first Lord of the Admiralty, who, in the preceding November, had affirmed that there were "thirty-five ships of the line ready for sea and fit for actual service, and seven more in great forwardness, which would be ready in a fortnight."

The Admiral appears to have behaved with great temper and discretion upon this unpleasant emergency. He maintained a total silence upon the subject; and, finding the force collected insufficient to require his personal superintendence, returned to town, and quietly and earnestly urged his applications to the Admiralty, who now endeavoured to make up for their former negligence, and employed every means to render the fleet as effective as possible.

The following letter probably first suggested the abolition of a practice common in the navy prior to that period:—

TO PHILIP STEPHENS, ESQ., SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY.

"Audley Square, 12th of April, 1778.

"SIR,—The method adopted of painting the names of the ships in large capitals on their sterns,

however proper and useful for the purpose intended, whilst the ships were lying in ordinary in the harbours, I cannot but apprehend may be improper and subject to great inconvenience, in cruising, if against an enemy, as it will lead neutral vessels that speak with the King's ships to the knowledge of their exact force, and assist the information those sent upon such an errand may be disposed to give to the enemy.

"I shall therefore hope their Lordships will permit me to solicit their leave and direction to the Navy Board, to have the names rubbed out of the sterns of those ships that are under my command.

"I am, Sir, your most obedient
"and very humble servant,
"A. KEPPEL."

To stimulate the seamen and artificers at their different occupations, the King and Queen visited the dock-yards and shipping at Chatham, Sheerness, and Portsmouth. At the latter place, they remained a week, during which time, the King held a levee on board Keppel's ship, the Prince George.

ADMIRAL KEPPEL TO LORD ROCKINGHAM.

"Portsmouth, April 26th, 1778.

"MY DEAR LORD,—You will easily imagine the hurry everybody is in here, fitting out a very large fleet, and making great preparations to receive the

King, who, I understand, is to be here next Saturday. The last easterly winds have plagued me with spasms very much, but this day promises me some ease. I hope Lady Rockingham has quite got clear of her complaint, and that you are returned well and rich from Newmarket. I propose going on board for good and all (attendance upon the King excepted) next Thursday. That day and Friday will be my own, if you should like to fly down, though I hardly know where to get you a room to sleep in. I think you would not like to be here, while Majesty is, crowded as it will be. When he leaves Portsmouth, there will probably be but a short time for the fleet to remain. If it should stay three or four days, it would be as good a time as any other, perhaps better; but now and then you will find confusion and inconvenience to yourself in getting lodged.

"My respects to Lady Rockingham. I write in great haste, and am, ever most faithfully,

"Your sincere humble servant,

"A. KEPPEL.

By the beginning of May, a considerable force was assembled at Portsmouth. The Admiral had every prospect of being shortly at sea, when he received an order to place nine of his ships of the line under the command of Vice-Admiral Byron, who was then at Plymouth, and about to proceed to Gibraltar, to prevent Monsieur d'Estaing's sail-

ing from Toulon. These ships were to be manned and fitted with the utmost despatch, and Admiral Keppel's fleet, which had been so hastily gathered together to protect this kingdom from invasion, was stripped of men, stores, and provisions, to supply another expedition. Such was the scarcity of stores, that even the tacks and sheets of the Valiant, and other cordage rove in that ship, and in the Ramillies, then under Keppel's command, were unrove and given to Byron's ships. Notwithstanding this assistance, Byron was unable to proceed to sea until the 9th of June, nearly two months after D'Estaing had sailed from Toulon.

On the 16th of May, Admiral Keppel shifted his flag from the Prince George to the Victory, Captain Faulkener, having as his first captain Rear-Admiral Campbell, who, from the love and esteem he entertained for the Admiral, volunteered to sail with him in this subordinate capacity.

On the 4th of June, the fleet dropped down to St. Helen's.

ADMIRAL KEPPEL TO LORD ROCKINGHAM.

"Victory, St. Helen's Roads, June 6th, 1778.

"My dear Lord,—I enclose you a letter that I received from my nephew, George Keppel; and this informs you that if the weather is tolerable, I shall get to sea this afternoon.

"D'Estaing's fleet was seen through the Straits of Gibraltar the 17th of May, and was left the 18th, steering to go between the island of Madeira and the Canary islands;—a course that does not determine whether for North America or the sugar islands.

"Any letters from you, directed to the care of John Lloyd, Esq., Plymouth Dock, will get to me frequently.

"The weather has been blowing and dirty, but being in the soft quarter, S.W., I have not suffered as I generally do with fine northerly winds.

"My respects most sincerely attend Lady Rockingham, and I am ever, my dear Lord,

"Your faithful and devoted humble servant,

"A. KEPPEL."

CHAPTER II.

BREAKING OUT OF HOSTILITIES—KEPPEL'S ACTION OFF BREST—REMARKS UPON ITS INDECISIVE RESULTS.

Departure of the Fleet—Secret Instructions—Breaking out of hostilities—Action between the Arethusa and Belle Poule—The French declare the English to be the aggressors, and direct reprisals—Keppel discovers the great superiority of the French fleet——Returns to port—Is neglected by the Admiralty—Insulted by the Ministerial press—His manly forbearance—Is reinforced—Falls in with the French fleet—Three days' chase—The action off Brest—Captain Jervis's private journal of the action—Conduct of Sir Hugh Palliser—Keppel returns to England.

1778.

THE Commander-in-Chief got under weigh on the 13th of June. The following ships comprised his fleet:—

Ships.	*Commanders.*	*Guns.*	*Men.*	*Division.*
Monarch	Capt. Rowley	74	600	Vice-Admiral of the Red.
Hector	Capt. Sir J. Hamilton, Bt.	74	600	
Exeter	Capt. Nott	64	500	
Queen	Sir R. Harland, Bart. / Capt. Prescott	90	750	
Shrewsbury	Sir John Lockhart Ross	74	600	
Cumberland	Capt. Peyton	74	600	
Berwick	Capt. Hon. K. Stewart	74	600	
Stirling Castle	Capt. Lloyd	64	500	

Ships.	*Commanders.*	*Guns.*	*Men.*	*Division.*
Courageux	Lord Mulgrave	74	600	Admiral of the Blue and Commander-in-chief.
Sandwich	Capt. Edwards	90	750	
Valiant	Capt. Hon. J. L. Gower	74	600	
Victory	Hon. Augustus Keppel, Rear-Admiral Campbell, Captain Faulkner	100	894	
Foudroyant	Capt. Jervis	80	650	
Prince George	Sir John Lindsay	90	750	
Bienfaisant	Captain Macbride	64	500	
Elizabeth	Capt. Hon. H. Maitland	74	600	Vice-Admiral of the Blue.
Robust	Capt. Hood	746	00	
Ocean	Sir Hugh Palliser, Bt., Capt. Laforcy	90	750	
America	Lord Longford	64	500	
Egmont	Capt. Allen	74	600	
Ramillies	Capt. Digby	74	600	

Arethusa, Fox, and Proserpine, frigates; Alert and Meredith, armed cutters; Vulcan, fire-ship.

The Formidable, of 90 guns, Captain Bazely; and Belleisle, of 64 guns, Captain Brooks, joined shortly afterwards.

The following are the instructions under which Admiral Keppel sailed :—

"*Secret Instructions for the Honourable Augustus Keppel, Admiral of the Blue Squadron of his Majesty's fleet, and Commander-in-Chief of a squadron of his Majesty's in the Channel Soundings, or wherever else his service may require ships employed, and to be employed.*

"Whereas, the very considerable armaments making in the ports of France, together with the late offensive proceedings of the French Court, give the strongest reason to apprehend that their intentions may be hostile against his Majesty's dominions and subjects. And whereas, from intelligence received, there is reason to believe that the French squadron, fitted out at Toulon, is designed to join the squadron at Brest; and it being of great importance that the junction of those squadrons should, if possible, be prevented, and that the troops destined to re-

inforce the garrison of Gibraltar, which are to embark at Portsmouth about the 24th inst., and proceed from thence under the convoy of Commodore Evans, in the Invincible, in conjunction with the Exeter, should be protected from any attempts that may be made to interrupt them by the ships from Brest. You are, therefore, in pursuance of his Majesty's pleasure, signified to us by Lord Viscount Weymouth, one of the Principal Secretaries of State, hereby required and directed, so soon as the troops before mentioned are embarked, to take Commodore Evans under your command, (he being directed to obey your orders,) and putting to sea, the first opportunity of wind and weather, with the Commodore and his convoy, and such of the ships of the squadron under your command as are in readiness, you are to proceed down the Channel into the latitude of Ushant, direct him to prosecute his voyage to Gibraltar, agreeable to the orders he shall have received from us; ordering, if you judge it necessary, some of the ships of your squadron to accompany the convoy, for its greater security, so much further on its way as you may think proper; and then to rejoin you on such rendezvous as you shall appoint. When you have despatched the convoy for Gibraltar, as above mentioned, you are, in further pursuance of his Majesty's pleasure, to cruise at such a distance, and upon such a station, off the port of Brest, as you shall judge most proper to prevent the junction of the French squadrons above mentioned, and to intercept any ships that may attempt to sail from Brest to molest the convoy going to Gibraltar. If you fall in with, or discover the Toulon squadron attempting to push into Brest, you are to use your utmost endeavours to take or destroy it; and if the Brest squadron, or any part of it should put to sea, you are to use the like endeavours to take or destroy such of the ships as you may be able to come up with.

"If the Brest squadron should slip by you, and proceed up the British Channel or to any part of the coast of Ireland, you are immediately to follow it; or, if you receive certain intelligence of its having taken any other route, you are, in that case, to pursue it, if there is a probability of your being able to overtake it, without leaving Great Britain and Ireland exposed, the protection of which must always be the principal object of your care and attention.

"If, in the course of your cruise, any of the ships of your squadron in chasing, or otherwise, should fall in with any French ships of the line of battle, they are to use their endeavours to take or destroy them; and, in case any French frigates of war should attend upon the fleet, or appear to be watching your motions, you are to oblige them to desist, and, on their refusal, to seize them and send them to England.

Intelligence having been received that several rich ships, bound to France from the East Indies, (a list of which is enclosed,) are shortly expected at Port L'Orient, or some other port in the Bay of Biscay, you are to direct the several commanders of the ships of your squadron, in case they fall in with the said ships, or any of them, to seize them and send them to some convenient port in England, to be secured until his Majesty's further pleasure concerning them shall be known, taking care that every person belonging to all ships so seized or intercepted be well treated, and that no plunder or embezzlement be made of any effects on board.

In case the Toulon squadron shall have joined the squadron at Brest before you arrive upon your station, or while you are upon it should elude your vigilance, and find the means of passing you into that port, and the two squadrons, when combined, should venture to come out, or if at the time the Toulon squadron may be attempting to push into the port of Brest, (pursued, perhaps, by the squadron under your command,) the squadron in that port should come out, in order to succour and effect a junction with the other, you are, in either of these cases, if the superiority of the French fleet is not very apparent, to give them battle. But if the French fleet, when the squadrons above mentioned are joined, shall be manifestly superior to yours, and should come out to meet you, or if you are satisfied that, after the junction of the two squadrons at Brest, they are superior to you, though they do not come out, you are, in either of those cases, to return with the squadron under your command to St. Helen's for a re-inforcement, it being our intention to direct not only the ships of your squadron which may not be in readiness to sail with you, but also such others as shall from time to time be got ready, to assemble at that place for the purpose of reinforcing you if it be necessary.

"You are, during the course of your cruise, to take or destroy all such ships and vessels belonging to the rebellious colonies, and all ships and vessels going to or returning from trading with those colonies, as you may fall in with.

"And whereas the great armaments that are making in the ports of Spain may, eventually, be ordered to join those in the ports of France, the preventing of which is of very great consequence, you are therefore, in pursuance of his Majesty's pleasure, signified as afore-mentioned, hereby required and directed to endeavour to seize any Spanish ships of war of the line that you may discover or meet with acting in conjunction with the French, and to intercept such as may be attempting to enter, or are evidently bound to any of the ports of France; but in all other cases you are to consider the ships of Spain as those of a power at peace and in friendship with Great Britain, and to afford them any assistance or protection they may stand in need of.

"You are to transmit to our secretary, for our information, before you sail, a copy of your intended rendezvous, and of the signals by which the ships of your squadron are to know each other; and you are to send to him, during your cruise, frequent accounts of your proceeding, with such intelligence as you may receive that may be necessary to be communicated to us, directing the officer by whom you send your despatches to forward the same, from the port where he arrives, by express.

"While you are employed on the service before mentioned, you are to protect such of the trade and ships of his Majesty's subjects as may fall in your way.

"You are to continue in the said service for the space of one month after you arrive upon your station; and, at the expiration of that time, to return with your squadron to St. Helen's, sending, by an express, an account of your arrival and proceedings, and waiting there for further orders.

"Given, &c., 25th April, 1778.

"Signed SANDWICH, LISBURNE,
J. BULLER, H. PEYTON."

Scarcely had the Admiral arrived on his station when two French frigates, accompanied by two

smaller vessels, were seen in the distance. Their manœuvres led him to suspect their object was to reconnoitre his fleet. Some little misgiving appears to have occurred in his mind, lest his detaining these vessels should be the means of inducing the French to declare war, and furnish Ministers with a pretext for denouncing him as the sole cause of involving his country in fresh difficulties. On the other hand, as these ships had seen his fleet, and would carry information to France of the force he had with him, he might be charged with gross negligence if he should suffer them to proceed without endeavouring to gain information respecting the naval force at Brest. In this dilemma, he determined to act in such a manner as would in his judgment be most conducive to the interest of the country, and he directed the fleet to chase.

Between five and six o'clock in the evening, Sir William Burnaby, in the Milford frigate, got alongside the Licorne, a French frigate of 32 guns and 230 men. Her captain was requested to accompany the Milford to the Admiral, and upon his refusal to do so, the Licorne was brought into the fleet. At nine o'clock at night the Admiral directed Sir Charles Douglas to bring the French ship under the Victory's stern, and at the same time instructed him to shew every civility to the French captain. The next morning, the Licorne put about on the opposite tack, with the intention

of making her escape. A shot was fired across her bow, as a signal for her to keep her course, when she suddenly poured her whole broadside, with a general discharge of musketry, into the America, and instantly struck her colours. This treacherous act was the more unjustifiable, as Lord Longford, the captain of the America, was, at the moment, standing on the gunwale of his own ship, in friendly conversation with the French commander. Providentially, only four of the America's men were wounded. A single broadside from the America would, in all probability, have sunk the Licorne, but Lord Longford contented himself with simply sending her under the Victory's stern.

In the meantime, the French frigate, La Belle Poule, with a 10-gun schooner in company, was closely pursued by the Arethusa, Captain Marshall, and the Alert cutter, Lieutenant Fairfax. As soon as the Arethusa came up with her chase, the French captain was requested to bring to. Upon his refusal, Captain Marshall fired a shot across his bow, which was returned by a broadside from the Frenchman. A furious engagement ensued. In about two hours the Arethusa was so much damaged in her sails and rigging as to become unmanageable. During the action, both ships had drifted close on the enemy's shore, and while the British frigate remained a complete wreck, the French ship managed, by the aid of a light breeze, to run into a small bay amongst the

rocks, whence she was next morning towed out of danger.

While the Arethusa was engaged with the Belle Poule, Lieut. Fairfax, in the Alert cutter, got alongside the French schooner, Le Courier, and requested her commander to stand to the fleet. He replied "He should do as the frigate did;" and when the Belle Poule fired into the Arethusa, he also poured his broadside into the Alert. Lieutenant Fairfax immediately ran on board of him, and after a smart action of an hour, compelled him to strike.

The following morning the Pallas, another French frigate, was brought into the fleet. From the extraordinary behaviour of the captain of the Licorne, Admiral Keppel felt it his duty to detain this last vessel.

The seizure and detention of these ships furnished the French with a pretence for charging the British nation with being the aggressors, and for issuing directions for reprisals. But as war had not been formally declared, several French merchant ships were allowed to pass unmolested through the fleet.

From papers found on board the Licorne and Belle Poule, and from information given by the prisoners, Keppel found to his astonishment that the French had thirty-two sail of the line, besides ten or twelve frigates in Brest Roads.*

* "Admiral Keppel found on board of each of the frigates La Pallas and La Licorne written orders not to molest that useful navigator, Captain Cook, on any account whatever."—Maritime Campaign of 1778, p. 5.

Had the crippling of the French fleet been the principal object of the Admiral's expedition, he might have been justified in remaining on his cruising ground, and, notwithstanding the inferiority of his own force, in giving battle to the enemy. But as his secret instructions expressly enjoined him, if he found the force at Brest superior to that of the English, to return to St. Helen's for a reinforcement, and not to leave exposed Great Britain and Ireland; the protection of which was to be the principal object of his care and attention, he found himself under the painful necessity of returning to England. In his letter to the Admiralty, he writes:—

"I cannot help, as an officer, allowing that the fleet under my command, of twenty ships of the line and two or three frigates, is manifestly inferior to the French fleet, as above stated. My instructions directing me, in such an event, to repair to St. Helen's, I think myself obliged, unpleasant as my feelings are upon the occasion, to repair thither.

"I am not bold enough, however my pride otherwise might have influenced me, to risk the fate of England upon the appearance of such inferiority on the side of the English fleet.

"I, however, most ardently hope that his Majesty may think well of my proceedings. The importance of my trust in the care and safety of his

dominions will never allow me, whilst the charge is in my hands, to risk a battle improperly, without at least an appearance of nearly an equality of of force, unless I have the King's express commands to do it, through the channel of the Admiralty; when that is his pleasure, he may be sure of my readiness to obey."

The fleet anchored at St. Helen's on the 27th of June.

No official notice, either in the shape of praise or blame, was taken of the course which Admiral Keppel, from a strong sense of duty, was led to adopt; but a similar silence was not preserved by the publications in the interest of the government. His return to port was ascribed to the most disgraceful motives, and he was directly threatened with the fate of Byng.

The treatment he received was thus mentioned in the House of Lords, by his old comrade, Augustus Hervey, who had recently succeeded to the Earldom of Bristol:—"Instead," said he, "of applause and testimonies of approbation for his conduct, the tools and scribblers of power were employed in every quarter of the town to whisper and write away his exalted character, by throwing out everywhere, that he had seized that opportunity of an imaginary force, to sacrifice the trade and everything else to his political revenge. The pensioned vehicles of infamy, detraction, and villany, poured

forth the dictates of their more infamous and profligate protectors and paymasters, not only by asserting that Admiral Keppel's return to port was in hopes of ruining the ministry, but also by a constant abuse on all those whose experience and whose judgment in naval matters justified the Admiral's conduct, and who dared to withstand the extended rod of power by so doing; and these were the reports of the day, these the grateful returns he then met with, and these the seeds that were then sown, and intended to produce his destruction hereafter."

Admiral Keppel observed, on this trying occasion, the same prudent and manly forbearance which had characterized his conduct upon discovering how grossly he had been deceived, as to the number of ships ready for sea. He bore in silence the unmerited obloquy lavished upon him by his anonymous accusers, abstained from criminating the First Lord of the Admiralty—for which a bare statement of facts would have sufficed—did all in his power to stifle discontent in others, and made every effort to equip his fleet for sea.

The Admiral's return to port naturally excited considerable alarm among the merchants of Great Britain; but the arts of his political enemies could not destroy the confidence they reposed in him. Mr. Long, Chairman of the West India Planters' and Merchants' Society, wrote to assure him of the confidence that was placed in him. In his reply he wrote that, "he hoped to give complete protection to the

trade of the country; that the protection of commerce, he concluded, was the first object and duty of a naval Commander-in-chief; that such had always been Lord Anson's way of thinking, in whose school he had been bred; and he trusted that the gentlemen on 'Change would give him credit for such sentiments, and a conduct conformable."

A supply of seamen having been obtained by the fortunate arrival of the first two of our West India fleets and the Levant trade, Keppel was enabled to put to sea on the 9th of July, with twenty-four sail of the line, four frigates, and two fire-ships. Two days afterwards he was joined by six more line-of-battle ships, and his fleet was thus made up to thirty sail of the line. These ships were thrown into three divisions; the van being commanded by Sir Robert Harland, Vice-Admiral of the Red; the centre by Admiral Keppel; and the rear by Sir Hugh Palliser, Vice-Admiral of the Blue.

On the day previous to Admiral Keppel's departure from Portsmouth, the French fleet, consisting of thirty-two sail of the line, and a vast number of frigates, sailed from Brest. This fleet was likewise divided into three divisions, under the command of Count D'Orvilliers, assisted by the Count Duchaffault, the Duke of Chartres,* and three other admirals.

* "The Duke of Chartres, afterwards the infamous Orleans, took occasion to acquaint Sir George (Rodney) that he was to have a com-

Scarcely had the French fleet left Brest, when they fell in with the Lively frigate, Captain Biggs, which had been stationed off that port to watch their motions. The Curieuse, a ten-gun cutter, and the Iphigénie frigate, commanded by the Sieur de Kersaint, ordered the Captain of the Lively to come and speak to the French Admiral. Upon his refusal, the Sieur de Kersaint gave orders for firing. Captain Biggs finding himself surrounded by the enemy, struck his colours, and was conducted by the Iphigénie into Brest.

It was hardly possible for two fleets, comprising so large a number of ships, and spreading over so great an extent of ocean, to be in search of one another, especially in the long days of summer, without shortly meeting. In the afternoon of the 23rd of July, the weather, which had been hazy, clearing up, the French fleet was discovered in the N.E. quarter, at about three leagues distant. The signal for forming the line was instantly thrown out.

The French Admiral at first appeared desirous of bringing on a general engagement; but as soon as

mand in the fleet which was to be opposed to that under the command of his friend and countryman, Mr. Keppel, and with an insulting air, asked him what he thought would be the consequence of their meeting? 'That my countryman will carry your Royal Highness home with him to learn English,' was the spirited reply."—Life of Lord Rodney, vol. i. p. 184.

In the action of the 27th of July, the Duke of Chartres retired into the hold of his ship, and refused to come on deck until the engagement was over.

he became aware of the increase of his adversary's force, he relinquished the design, and used the utmost diligence and caution to defeat Keppel's endeavours to bring him to action.

By the time our fleet had formed in line of battle; the evening had closed in, and Keppel hove to, trusting the next morning to be engaged with the enemy. A change of wind, with a fresh gale in the night, made a considerable difference in the relative position of the two fleets. In the morning, the French fleet was seen attempting to escape under a press of sail; upon which Keppel threw out the signal for a general chase.

Two of the enemy's ships of the line having fallen to the leeward, the admiral, who felt he could not force on a general action, with the wind in its present quarter, resolved to cut off these vessels, and thereby to compel the French Admiral either to sacrifice them, or to hazard an engagement in their defence. Mons. D'Orvilliers, however, chose rather to suffer a reduction of his strength than to risk a battle. The two ships, being excellent sailors, were not taken; they were, however, so effectually separated, as to be unable to rejoin the fleet during the remainder of the cruise.

For four successive days the French continued to hold the weather gauge, and Keppel vainly endeavoured to bring them to action. Finding it

impossible to preserve a regular line of battle while in pursuit of the French fleet, with any hope of nearing them, he ordered the signal for keeping the line to be hauled down, and that for chasing to windward to be kept flying.

At day-break, on the 27th of July, the French fleet was nearly three miles to windward, and still endeavouring to avoid a meeting. The English fleet had pressed on with an ardour which had occasioned the ships to be rather extended from each other. Sir Robert Harland was about four miles distant on the Victory's weather-quarter. Sir Hugh Palliser was three miles to leeward of the Victory, but, instead of making sail to recover his station, continued with his main-sail up, dropping still further to leeward, and thereby obliging the ships of his division to stand under easy sail. Keppel, observing this, made the signal for several ships of Sir Hugh's division to chase to windward. Upon this hint, Sir Hugh set his mainsail, and let the reefs out of his top-sails. *"At eight o'clock the wind was at S.W., and the body of the French fleet bore directly on that point, both fleets on the larboard tack, standing W.N.W. The French fleet wore by signal, one after the other, to preserve their line. This evolution was not finished till near ten o'clock, when they were all on the starboard tack,

* That portion of the account of the action, within inverted commas, is from Captain Jervis's (Lord St. Vincent's) private journal.

in a very perfect line of battle, a-head. At that moment, Admiral Keppel tacked his fleet together by signals very successfully."

"Soon after," continues Jervis, "the English fleet was tacked, the wind shifted to the W.S.W., which advantage, joined to the ground gained by tacking, and that lost by the enemy by veering in the manner described, caused us to look well up for them, and left them no other means of avoiding an action but tacking and trying to weather us. This they attempted, but many of the centre and rear, missing stays, they were brought still nearer to us, and that part of the line was thrown into great disorder. All this happened between ten and eleven o'clock. The two fleets were then on different tacks—the French on the larboard, standing to the N.W., the English on the starboard, standing to the southward, our van stemming their rear. In passing the van of the enemy some shots were fired from two of their ships, one of them carrying a flag, and supposed to be the St. Esprit, commanded by the Duc de Chartres, upon which his Majesty's ships, Monarch and Shrewsbury, hoisted their colours and began to engage. At twenty minutes past eleven, Admiral Keppel made the signal of battle. Our van passed the French line without receiving heavy damage; but this firing brought the enemy down so much, that most of their centre and rear passed the greatest part of our centre and rear within musket shot, and the

wind having been quite abated by the concussion of the air, a very sharp cannonade continued on the centre till near one o'clock, and on the rear, till forty minutes after one, when the firing ceased."

Admiral Keppel, determining to reserve his broadside for the French Admiral, received the fire of six different ships before he returned a shot; and, although on opposite tacks, such was the effect of the Victory's fire, that two or three port-holes of the Bretagne, D'Orvilliers' ship, were knocked into one, and the French seamen driven for a time from their guns. From this ship he passed on and engaged six others, in succession.

The French, as on all former occasions, directed their fire more against the masts and sails than the hulls of our vessels, and poured in a heavy fire of langridge, and even made use of old nails, twisted hoops, and bits of iron to wound and destroy the rigging.

As soon as the Victory had passed the rear of the enemy, Keppel looked round at the position of his fleet, which the smoke had till then obscured from observation. He found that Sir Robert Harland, with part of his division, had tacked, and were standing towards the enemy "with a manly sail."* The rest of the ships that had got out of action were still on the starboard tack, some of them

* Jervis's Journal.

dropping to leeward, and, seemingly, employed in repairing their damages. The Victory was lying with her head to the southward, with very little way, and in no condition to tack. Nor, indeed, did such a course seem desirable, as it must necessarily have occasioned the greatest confusion among the ships that were coming up astern of her out of the action. Notwithstanding her damages, the Victory was the first ship of the centre division that got round towards the enemy again.

"A quarter before two, the signal for battle was hauled down, and the signal to veer made; and at two the Admiral stood after the enemy, and made the signal for the line of battle a-head. At three, the enemy being in a degree formed on the larboard tack, and shewing a countenance not to decline a renewal of the attack, and our whole rear, with some of the centre, making no effort to get into their station in the line of battle, the Admiral made the signal to veer, (the fleet was too much damaged to tack,) and soon afterwards, the signal for the fleet to bear down into his wake."*

Hitherto, Sir Hugh Palliser's ship, the Formidable, was in her proper station a-head of the Victory, when, although the signal for the line of battle was flying, she quitted her station, passed to leeward of the Victory, which was then standing towards the

* Jervis's Journal.

enemy, and did not come again into the line for the remainder of the day.

"The Victory," says Keppel, afterwards on his trial, "was the nearest ship to the enemy, with no more than three or four of the centre division in any situation to have supported each other in action. Sir Hugh Palliser was on the starboard tack, standing away from his station, totally regardless of the signal that was flying to form the line; and most of the other ships, except Sir Robert Harland's division, were far astern, and five disabled ships at a greater distance on the lee-quarter."

An attempt was made by the French to take possession of these five disabled ships. Admiral Keppel ordered Sir Robert Harland to form with his division astern of the Victory to cover the rear, and to keep the enemy in check till Sir Hugh Palliser, with his division, should come into his station in obedience to the signal. Sir Robert Harland instantly obeyed the order, and, by four o'clock, was formed in the Admiral's wake. Keppel, finding by the course he steered, to protect the crippled ships, he was nearing the enemy, and that Sir Hugh Palliser still continued to lay to windward, and, by so doing, kept his division from joining, made the signal for ships to windward to bear down into the Admiral's wake. In order that this might be better distinguished, both being signals at the mizen-peak, the signal for the line was hauled down for about

five minutes, and then hoisted again. The signal for ships to bear down, Sir Hugh repeated, though he had not repeated that for the line of battle; but, by not bearing down himself, he led the ships of his division to interpret his repeating it as requiring them to come into his wake, instead of that of the commander-in-chief.

Having accomplished the protection of the disabled ships, and the French fleet continuing to form their line, ranging up to leeward parallel to the centre division, Keppel's only object was to form his line, in order to bear down and renew the battle. At a quarter before five, after having repeated, with no better success than before, the signal for ships to windward to bear down into his wake, he sent the Milford with orders to Sir Robert Harland to stretch a-head, and take his station in the line, which was instantly obeyed. Sir Hugh Palliser making no visible effort to obey the signal, the Admiral sent the Fox, at five o'clock, with an order to him to bear down into his wake, and to tell him that he only waited for him and his division to renew the battle. This message was delivered to Sir Hugh Palliser at half-past five o'clock.

The Admiral having hauled down the signal for ships to come into his wake, made that for all ships to come into their stations, at the same time keeping the signal for the line flying. All this produced no effect on Sir Hugh Palliser; and "at twenty minutes

past six," says Captain Jervis, "the Admiral, perceiving no regard to general signals by the Vice-Admiral, (Sir H. Palliser,) made the specific signals for each ship of his division to get into her station; before this was accomplished, the day closed."

During the night, which was excessively dark, the British fleet remained in a line of battle, anxiously waiting until morning should allow them to renew the action. The Formidable, however, was not in her station until near daylight, but kept under easy sail to windward, and a-stern of the Admiral.

The French shewed no lights until between ten and eleven o'clock, when two rockets and some false fires were exhibited. Soon afterwards, three lights were seen in such a position as to induce the English to conclude that they belonged to the three French Admirals; and every half hour a flash, like that of a musket, was repeated during the night.

When daylight came, the hopes of the English were converted into disappointment, for the whole of the French fleet, with the exception of three sail, which were seen on the lee-quarter, were barely visible from the mast-heads of a few of the British ships. Orders for chase were immediately given, but, as there was not the slightest chance of their coming up with the enemy, they were shortly afterwards recalled.

It appears that the French had taken the opportunity, under cover of the night, to make their escape; and, in order to deceive the English, had left three of their fastest sailing ships to make a parade with their lights, on the spot where the whole fleet was stationed the evening before.

As Keppel now found it in vain to attempt a general or a partial chase, he determined to return to England to repair the heavy damages his fleet had sustained, and having left the Valiant, Bienfaisant, and two frigates, to protect the British trade, he arrived with the remainder of his fleet at Plymouth, on the 31st of July.

Although Admiral Keppel felt that he was prevented by the defection of Sir Hugh Palliser from bringing the action to a more decisive issue, he was very unwilling to arraign his conduct in a public despatch, and, as was afterwards proved on the trial, "had great difficulty in forming the rough draught of the (official) letter, to relate facts without censuring the man whom he thought his friend."*

An attempt was afterwards made to turn the Admiral's forbearance against himself by the very man whose conduct it was intended to screen.

The following is the dispatch:—

* Evidence of Mr. Rogers, Keppel's Trial, p. 124.

ADMIRAL KEPPEL TO PHILIP STEPHENS, ESQ., SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY.

"Victory, (at sea,) July 30th, 1778.

"SIR,—My letters of the 23rd and 24th instant, by the Peggy and Union letters, acquainted you, for their lordships' information, that I was in pursuit, with the King's fleet under my command, of a numerous fleet of French ships of war.

"From that time, till the 27th, the winds constantly in the S.W. and N.W. quarters, sometimes blowing strong, and the French fleet always to windward, going off. I made use of every method to close in with them that was possible, keeping the King's ships at the same time collected, as much as the nature of a pursuit would admit of, and which became necessary from the cautious manner the French proceeded in, and the disinclination that appeared in them to allow of my bringing the King's ships close up to a regular engagement. This left but little other chance of getting in with them than by seizing the opportunity that offered, the morning of the 27th, by the wind's admitting of the van of the King's fleet under my command leading up, and closing with, their centre and rear.

"The French began firing upon the headmost of Vice-Admiral Sir Robert Harland's division, and the ships with him, as they led up; which cannonade the leading ships and the Vice-Admiral soon returned, as did every ship as they closed up. The

chase had occasioned their being extended; nevertheless, they were all soon in battle.

"The fleets being on different tacks, passed each other very close; the object of the French seemed to be the disabling the King's ships in their masts and sails, in which they so far succeeded as to prevent many of the ships of my fleet being able to follow me when I wore to stand after the French fleet. This obliged me to wear again, to join those ships, and thereby allowed of the French forming their fleet again, and ranging it in a line to leeward of the King's fleet towards the close of the day, which I did not discourage, but allowed of their doing it, without firing upon them, thinking they meant handsomely to try their force with us the next morning; but they had been so beaten in the day that they took the advantage of the night to go off.

"The wind and weather being such that they could reach their own shores before there was any chance of the King's fleet getting up with them, in the state the ships were in, in their masts, yards, and sails, left me no choice of what was proper and advisable to do.

"The spirited conduct of the Vice-Admiral Sir Robert Harland, Vice-Admiral Sir Hugh Palliser, and the captains of the fleet, supported by their officers and men, deserves much commendation.

"A journal of my proceedings with the fleet since I left the English land, accompanies this. I

shall omit nothing that lays with me to get the ships as soon as possible in condition to be able to proceed on further service.

"I send Captain Faulkner, captain of the Victory, with this account, to their Lordships.

"I am, sir, your most obedient and very humble servant, A. KEPPEL."

LIST OF THE KILLED AND WOUNDED.

Ships.	*Killed.*	*Wounded.*
Monarch	2	9
Exeter	4	6
Queen	1	2
Shrewsbury	3	6
Berwick	10	11
Stirling Castle	2	11
Courageux	6	13
Thunderer	2	5
Vigilant	2	3
Sandwich	2	20
Valiant	6	26
Victory	11	24
Foudroyant	5	18
Prince George	5	15
Vengeance	4	18
Worcester	3	5
Elizabeth	0	7
Defiance	8	17
Robust	5	17
Formidable*	16	49
Ocean	2	18
America	1	17
Terrible	9	21
Egmont	12	19
Ramillies	12	16

* A considerable number of the casualties on board the Formidable was occasioned by an accidental explosion of gunpowder during the engagement.

But while Keppel refrained from proclaiming to the world his disapprobation of the behaviour of one of his flag-officers, he considered it due to himself and the fleet, to give the First Lord of the Admiralty an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the actual circumstances of the case. He therefore instructed Captain Faulkner, the bearer of his dispatches, to tell him, that "he had more to say to his Lordship than he chose to commit to writing." This message was repeated twice to Lord Sandwich, but he could not, or would not, understand its purport, and took no notice of it whatever. Upon arriving at their anchorage, Captain Jervis thus writes to the Secretary of the Admiralty:—

"Foudroyant, Plymouth Sound,
July 31st, 1778.

"My dear Jackson,—I do not agree with Goodall, that we have been outwitted. The French, I am convinced, never would have fought us, if they had not been surprised into it, by a sudden shift of wind; and when they formed their inimitable line, after our brush, it was merely to cover their intention of flight. Four of our ships having got themselves to leeward, so far as to be cut off by the enemy, if Admiral Keppel had not judiciously bore down to them, and the shattered state of Sir Hugh's, which disabled him from taking his place in the

line, rendered it impossible to renew the attack on the evening of the 27th.

"I have often told you, that two fleets of equal force never can produce decisive events, unless they are equally determined to fight it out; or the commander-in-chief of one of them misconducts his line.

"I perceive it is the fashion of people to puff themselves, and no doubt you have seen, or will see some of these accounts. For my part, I forbade the officers to write by the frigate that carried the despatches—I did not write a syllable myself, except touching my health; nor shall I, but to state the intrepidity of the officers and people under my command (through the most infernal fire I ever saw or heard of) to my Lord Sandwich, in which particular mention will be made of young Wells.

"In justice to the Foudroyant, I must observe to you, that though she received the fire of seventeen sail, and had the Bretagne, Ville de Paris, and a seventy-four upon her at the same time, and appeared more disabled in her masts and rigging, than any other ship; she was the first in the line of battle, and really and truly fitter for business in essentials (because the people were cool) than when she began. Keep this to yourself, unless you hear too much said in praise of others.

"Yours, &c. J. J."

It is evident that from the moment the French Admiral discovered the strength of our fleet, he intended to avoid an engagement, and this intention he would have accomplished, but for an accidental shift of wind. D'Orvilliers, doubtless expected to find Keppel with no greater number of ships than he had with him when he fell in with the Licorne and Belle Poule. But on finding the British fleet had been reinforced, he resolved upon the retreat, which he effected on the night of the action.

Had Keppel been properly supported by his van division, it is fair to infer, judging from the disinclination which the French shewed to engage, that he would have forced them to fly before the night came on, and in that case, he might have put in practice the lesson he learned under Hawke, in 1759, and have captured some of the enemy's ships, and driven others on shore, upon their own coast.

Few actions have been more canvassed than this of Keppel, and while some writers out of an affected tenderness for the admiral's reputation, have professed to draw a veil over the occurrences of the day; others have censured him for not adopting a system of tactics, not known at the period when the action was fought.

In 1782, Mr. John Clerk, of Eldin, published his "Essay on Naval Tactics," and disclosed, for the first time, the mode of cutting asunder the enemy's

line—a manœuvre which has since affected so wonderful a revolution in naval warfare. In this work, he points out, in a series of diagrams, how Keppel's action might have been fought with more advantage, if this discovery had been known and acted upon at the time; and in 1820, an anonymous writer in Admiral Ekins' "Naval Battles," availing himself of the additional knowledge that such an interval of time afforded, has given what he considers an improvement upon Clerk's plan, although the same principle of passing through the line is adopted.

"Admiral Keppel," observes this writer, "lost his chance of a victory, by not *passing through* the enemy's line, with his *van*, before the shift of wind."*

When we consider the scattered state of Keppel's fleet, occasioned by so many days' chase, and his coming up so unexpectedly with the enemy, it may be fairly argued that such a movement, even if known at the time, would have been scarcely feasible under the circumstances.

The writer goes on to say: "Admiral Keppel lost another opportunity of defeating the French fleet, by not attacking it in the night," and, in confirmation, quotes Nelson, who says—"If I fall in with the French fleet in the night, I shall engage them immediately: they do badly in the day, but much worse by night."† This was said by that great com-

* Ekins' Naval Battles, p. 54. † Ibid.

mander, in the West Indies, in 1805, twenty-seven years after Keppel's action, and when great improvements had been made both in tactics and signals. But Keppel could not have engaged the fleet on the night of the 27th of July—first, because it was a very dark night; secondly, because, to use the words of Admiral Campbell, at the trial—"His (Keppel's) signals had been so ill obeyed by the Vice-Admiral of the Blue during the day, that he durst not make any chasing-signal in the night to have pursued the enemy, at the risk of finding a great part of his fleet lying to windward of him in the morning."*

The belief that prevailed, in 1778, of the impossibility of forcing a reluctant enemy to engage, was universal, and this cannot be more strongly shewn than by Jervis's letter, already quoted. "I have often told you that two fleets of equal force never can produce decisive events, unless they are equally determined to fight it out—or the Commander-in-chief of one of them misconducts his line." The hero of St. Vincent lived to be of a different opinion.

The principle of forcing the line appears so simple, that it is astonishing it was not sooner discovered; and still more so, that the discovery should at last have been made, not by a naval man, but by

* Keppel's Court-Martial, p. 129. "The signals which were used by Admiral Keppel have remained in nearly the same shamefully defective state since the reign of James the Second."—Beatson's Memoirs, vol. iv., p. 427. 1804.

a private gentleman, who had never been to sea in his life.

The fair way of testing Admiral Keppel's merits, as an officer, in the action of July, is not by the improved system of more recent warfare, but by the mode of conducting sea-fights at the period when the engagement took place. If this criterion be adopted, the question has been already answered by his contemporaries. In the court-martial which followed, every officer in command of a ship in the action was examined upon the conduct of the Commander-in-chief, and the result was that—the Admiral was declared (to use the words of his sentence) "to have behaved himself as became a judicious, brave, and experienced officer;" and it is remarkable that, of the thirty-one officers thus examined, not one of them could point out a single instance in which he shewed any deficiency of skill or ability, or could demonstrate in what other manner the action might have been made to produce more decisive results. If any defect could have been shewn, it is natural to conclude that it would have been pointed out by some of the officers of Palliser's division.

CHAPTER III.

CORRESPONDENCE.

The Duke of Portland to the Marquess of Rockingham—Edmund Burke to Admiral Keppel—Captain Jervis to George Jackson, Esq.—Duchess of Portland to Admiral Keppel—Duke of Richmond to Admiral Keppel—Admiral Keppel to Philip Stephens, Esq.—Keppel's ineffectual search for the French fleet.

THE DUKE OF PORTLAND TO THE MARQUESS OF ROCKINGHAM.

"Burlington House, Saturday night, Aug. 1st, 1778.

"My dear Lord,—I cannot go to bed without returning you the duchess's and my best thanks, for your kind, friendly, and comfortable letter, and congratulating with you on the good and great admiral's having done everything that the wind and prudence of the French would permit. As I hope to see you so soon, and that I am almost blind with writing, I shall only add that I am, with the sincerest attachment, my dear lord,

"Your most faithful,

"Obliged, and obedient,

"Portland."

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ. TO ADMIRAL KEPPEL.

" Beaconsfield, August, 1778.

" My dear Admiral,—Before I give you my share of the public thanks, for the service and the honour you have done your country, let me give my first thanks to Providence for your health and safety. Your victory without those would be good but for once; but in your safety I hope many victories are in store to be obtained both by yourself, and by those who will be formed by your instruction and example.

" You have saved us twice in one summer; once by retreating, and once by fighting. The disciplined mob of court runners in the city, thought proper, for some time, to censure the conduct to which we owe it, that the neglect of their employers was not as mischievous as it was inexcusable; but the appearance of the French fleet off Ushant has shewn your wisdom and their folly. At present they only venture to whisper, that you might have done more; but in this whisper the courtiers do not venture to support them—they only shew, by their extravagant expectations, what an opinion they have of you, in spite of their teeth. Every honest man, every man of judgment congratulates you and himself, with a sedate joy, on this great and eminent advantage. The designs which this fleet of the enemy were

meant to second are defeated, and the honour of our flag completely secured. It appears very evident, that if the force they had could not encourage them to stand a regular engagement with you, nothing but a superiority, which, notwithstanding our misconduct, I hope they never can have, can tempt them to meet you again. Their gasconades cannot cover their consciousness of their own situation. I have not seen anything which appears so ludicrous to me, as their mistaking their way into their own harbour.* Indeed they are not such blunderers as they would represent themselves. I hope you will be able once more to teach them the way into Brest water, if they do not yet know it sufficiently.

"Lord Richard Cavendish† is charmed with you, and we are not a little proud of your approbation of him; and were much pleased that he has satisfied a generous curiosity, and enjoyed an honourable polish without prejudice to life or limb. Adieu, my dear admiral—receive my warmest congratulations, my sincerest thanks, and my most fervent wishes, for your future honour and happi-

* The French Gazette said, "The astonishment was general when they discovered the Isle of Ushant itself, which the Count D'Orvilliers thought himself distant from, about twenty-five or thirty leagues; and that, seeing himself off the harbour of Brest, he determined to enter it."

† He was a volunteer on board the Victory, and worked at one of the quarter-deck guns during the action.

ness. I am, with the highest and most affectionate esteem,

"Your most faithful and
obliged humble servant,
"EDM. BURKE."

"P.S. Lord Rockingham was so good as to send me tidings of you. I went to town instantly, where we bumpered you and the captains who seconded you so gallantly."

CAPTAIN JERVIS TO GEORGE JACKSON, ESQ.

"Plymouth Dock, Aug. 9th, 1778.

"SINCE I sealed the enclosed, I am happy in your letter of the 5th; I am in hopes what I have said of young Wells to Lord S., will, in this dearth of lieutenants, help to get over his time; if it does not, I shall be very happy to have him continue with me.

"The Prince George merits, by all accounts, all that can be said of her; she, nor any other ship, was in the fire the Foudroyant was. The Egmont suffered much from the Thunderer's firing into her, and from the America running on board of her in the night of the 27th. Jack Allen is a very gallant fellow, and will always be in the fire, if possible. I do not believe the attack would have been renewed to any effect the evening of the 27th. It was certainly intended by Admiral Keppel, who, when he found the Vice of the Blue

and his division did not form the line with him, agreeable to the signal, sent Sir H. a message by a frigate, to this effect: "Tell the Vice of the Blue I only wait for his division to renew the attack." Neither the signal nor message was obeyed in any degree till it was too late; and the Formidable did not, in view, bear down at all; I conclude she was so disabled she could not. In that event, ought not the flag to have been shifted?* All this is mere chimera of my own, perhaps, for I have heard it from no one, nor do I believe there is the least coolness between the admirals.

"Your letter has caused me to write more than I intended, but I have done it in full confidence that you will burn the letter instantly, and never utter the contents. The Formidable suffered most from within the ship; and I hear several of Berwick's men were killed by the Vigilant. I do not vouch for the latter.

"Yours, &c.

"J. JERVIS."

DUCHESS OF PORTLAND TO ADMIRAL KEPPEL.

"Wednesday, Aug. 19th, 1778.

"ADMIRAL KEPPEL'S most beautiful present would have been at any time considered by the Duchess

* The same question was asked in one of the pamphlets of the day, in which it is stated that Palliser might easily have shifted his flag into the Ocean.—(Naval Discipline, p. 161.) In 1744, Matthews shifted from the Namur into the Russell; and in the action with de la Clue, Boscawen shifted from the Namur into the Newark.

of Portland as a very great obligation, but in a moment like the present, to receive a mark of his attention, is what she could not have expected, and for which, therefore, she is at a loss how to express her thanks. The estimation in which she will ever hold his gift must be the proof of her sentiments, and of that she hopes he will often be a witness, when his fatigues are ended, and he returns to that ease and glory to which he is already, and will, if possible, be further entitled. The Duke of Portland is much obliged to Admiral Keppel for his letter; he did not think it necessary to trouble him with an answer, but will certainly obey his commands."

THE DUKE OF RICHMOND TO ADMIRAL KEPPEL.

"Brighthelmstone, August 21st, 1778.

"My Dearest Admiral,—You need make no excuses for not writing an account of your engagement, on the 27th of July, to me. You had much more important business on your hands. If you employed the time you might be writing to me in resting from your fatigues, it is a much greater satisfaction to me than any letter could have been. It is not necessary to write to convince me of your friendship; and your taking the quiet so necessary to your health interests me on every account, both public and private.

"It is now my turn to beg your pardon, for not having congratulated you sooner on your success, on the 27th. I did not know whether a letter would reach you at Plymouth, for the newspaper accounts of you were, that you would sail again in a few days. Besides, I did not care to give you the trouble which you might think necessary to answer me. I was infinitely happy in the copy of your letter to the Marquis, which he was so good as to send me by express. My first feelings were for your safety. My anxiety as to the event was what occupied me next, because I thought it very possible it might decide the fate of this country for many years. As to the honour of your conduct, it is what I never thought about. It is one of those points so fixed, that I thought as little about it, as whether my fingers and pen would form the words I am writing to you. Be assured that every man who can reason upon naval affairs is convinced, from your account and those of your fleet, that you did all that circumstances and the elements would allow of. I thank God your reputation is so great and well established, that those who are quite ignorant of sea affairs are satisfied that no more could have been done, because you commanded. Indeed, I think that, on the whole, you have also reason to be satisfied with the newspapers. It cannot be expected, in a country distracted and half ruined like this, but that many, feeling the evil effects of a bad go-

vernment, should throw blame everywhere. When *all our fleet* and our *first Admiral* sail, Englishmen have been made to expect a capture of at least half the navy of France—and they had rather blame a commander, whose ships were so crippled that he could not pursue a flying enemy in a hard gale of wind, on a lee-shore, than a ministry for reducing the nation to such circumstances, as to be unable to send out a fleet equal to France.

"In such a perilous moment it requires, my dear admiral, your head, your heart, and your established character, to preserve our fleet—that fleet on which our internal safety depends. Your giving them an opportunity of forming their line in the night seems to have been the only chance of bringing them to a *decisive* action, which seems to me to be what you ought to aim at. For as Spain, I think, must sooner or later join France, it is much to our advantage to have such a battle with France, single-handed. The French account of their desire to fight, and of their victory, is absurd indeed. It seems to me that their plan, and perhaps orders, were not to fight, but to avoid a general engagement if possible. I imagine this from their avoiding you for four days. But to pretend an inclination to fight and success, when all your fleet saw them fly, is absurd, silly, and ridiculous. I wish their gascónade may tempt them to come out again and meet you; that will be the only proof of their intentions.

"Enclosed, I send you a letter I have just received from my nephew, Lord Charles Fitzgerald.* It explains itself, and I have only to add, that I know your readiness to oblige me, and you know my wishes for so near a relation, who appears to do credit to his family. Be so kind as to let me know what hopes I may give him. I have just seen the General.† About three weeks ago he went through here. He was then well in health, but has since been very ill. I am happy he is recovered.

"I have also seen your mother,‡ whose whole soul is absorbed in anxiety for your safety. Your letter made her very happy. She is tolerably well in health, and her spirits vary as she hears of your being in safety or danger.

"The Duchess sends her best and most affectionate compliments. God grant you complete success, and believe me,

"Ever yours, most sincerely,

"RICHMOND."

"P.S. There are reports at Portsmouth of some misunderstanding between you and Sir Hugh Palliser. If they are false, pray enable me to contradict them."

Although the Admiralty abstained from conveying to Keppel the slightest approbation of his conduct,

* Created Lord Lecale in 1800, and died the same year.

† Hon. William Keppel. ‡ Aunt to the Duke of Richmond.

it would appear, by the following extracts from letters addressed to the Earl of Buckinghamshire, that his conduct was viewed by some of the ministerial party in its proper light.

Viscount Townshend writes—"I transmit to your Excellency, if no official intelligence shall better detail it, the very important action at sea. Mr. Keppel has certainly done everything that a gallant and able officer could, but, unhappily for the nation, at this crisis, it has not been attended with that decision which the woful state of our affairs required. The admiral bore down, or rather up, to the French, through the fire of several ships, to the enemy's principal ship, hoping to obtain a close engagement. Their principal object was our masts and rigging, which suffered much. Their manœuvres were allowed by all to be exceedingly able, and, I am sorry to say, much admired."*

The Earl of Suffolk, in a letter to the same nobleman, states—"Your lordship will be disappointed, that the opportunity of giving a good blow to the French marine has failed. I fear we shall not speedily have another; but winds are no more in the command of an English admiral, than true spirit is in that of a French one."†

The utmost dispatch was now used in refitting the fleet. "The effort we are making," writes Captain Jervis to Mr. Jackson, "to meet the

* Sir Robert Heron's MSS. † Ibid.

French with the same ships, is a noble one, and worthy of Admiral Keppel."

Such, however, was the neglect of the marine department and the want of stores, that Keppel found himself compelled to beg the Admiralty would permit his dismantling the Blenheim to supply the deficiencies of the other ships.

ADMIRAL KEPPEL TO PHILIP STEPHENS, ESQ., SECRETARY OF THE ADMIRALTY.

"SIR,—The Egmont is in Hamoaze, and, should she be delayed in getting out to-morrow, which her works may occasion, I hope one or two days will complete her, and that what will appear to have been done, both by the officers of the yard, as well as by Captain Allen, his officers, and men, will deserve much applause. A ship crippled in battle in her masts and yards—much wounded by shot-holes in her bottom, not to be got at but by taking everything out, is carried into harbour, her masts all taken out, the ship docked, her shot defects repaired, part of a new false keel put on, turned out of dock, completed with new masts and rigging, and returned into the Sound within twenty days, and now within two or three days of going to sea on service, I own appears to me an exertion of dispatch astonishing.

"I am, &c.,

"A. KEPPEL."

Notwithstanding the endeavours to equip our fleet, the French were again at sea a week before the British, who were compelled to sail with many of their masts and yards fished for want of others being in store.

Feeling he had been deprived of a complete victory by the remissness of Sir Hugh Palliser's division, in joining the body of the fleet, Keppel issued the following memorandum to the several captains of his fleet:—

"Victory, off the Lizard, 26th of August, 1778.

"MEMORANDUM.—The Admiral recommends it most particularly to the captains of the ships under his command, that they at all times close in with the body of the fleet, in their several stations, as near as the nature of winds and weather will permit, as it may be of the utmost consequence, upon falling suddenly and unexpectedly in with the enemy's fleet in great force, for the King's fleet to be in a collected body."

Shortly after sailing, Keppel was informed that the enemy's fleet, thirty-nine in number, had been seen on the 22nd of August, twelve leagues to the westward of Ushant. But, when he bent his course thither, they were not to be found. He then dispatched the Porcupine and Fox frigates in quest of them, while he continued to cruise in the tract he had heard they had taken. The following day

the Porcupine captured the Modeste, Indiaman, and returned with her prize to Plymouth.

It is evident, from the following replies to letters written by Admiral Keppel, that he had expressed bitter disappointment at not again falling in with the enemy.

THE DUKE OF PORTLAND TO ADMIRAL KEPPEL.

"Teignmouth, Sept. 16th, 1778.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Nothing could be more unexpected than your taking the trouble of writing to me; nothing, therefore, could be more flattering to the anxious solicitude which I feel for your situation than the very kind letter I had the satisfaction of receiving from you on Sunday last. Notwithstanding the reports of the French fleets being at sea, I own my mind could not be brought to give them credit till they were confirmed by you. For what purpose they are out, it is almost impertinent for me to hazard a conjecture, after the difficulty you express upon that subject. Is it likely that they should be gone to meet the Toulon squadron that we heard of? or is it possible they can keep out of your way, and save Monsieur de Sartine's honour, or rather credit at court, by giving him an opportunity of imposing upon his master by telling him you were not to be found?—a lie which I believe many a Frenchman, and particularly a king of France, extremely capable of being the dupe of.

To suppose them gone to America, is what I can't well reconcile myself to the idea of. I should conceive the question must be decided there before they could arrive; and from what you seem to insinuate with regard to the state and condition of many of their ships, it is not very probable that they should venture so far from home. Some people, who are inclined to believe that they are gone to Cadiz to join the Spaniards, say that they know the language of the court of Spain is much altered since your victory of the 27th, and that you have had much information from the ministry. To this doctrine and their assertions I find myself equally reluctant to assent. Had the latter been true, your letter would have been dictated in a very different style, and you would not have been at a loss to guess at the object of their coming out. I hear from Holland that the politicians there are convinced that Spain waits to see the event of your second meeting with M. D'Orvilliers, and will certainly not take a decidedly hostile part unless the French should gain some advantage, or, at least, make it a fair drawn battle, which they, the Dutch, are satisfied was very far from being the case on the 27th of July, and is very feebly contended for even by the partisans of France. Their hero is Duchaffault, who they, the French, say was very ill supported, or he would have given you a great deal more trouble. A friend of mine, who was at Paris about

a fortnight ago, writes me word, that the French already burlesque their engagement at sea, and have made several ballads and epigrams upon the Duke of Chartres' prudence, and the absurdity and vanity exhibited on the occasion at the Palais Royal. That you may have an opportunity of giving a serious turn to this sport, and obtaining for your own mind and body that relief which it requires, I am persuaded you are assured of my most earnest wishes. But when you consider how improbable it is that the French should give you such an opportunity, for your own sake, for the sake of your friends, for the sake of your country, be satisfied with having done everything that a man ought or could do to force the enemy to a decisive action. Recollect (and I am sure you may do it with pleasure) the zeal and activity of the generality of your officers in getting out again to sea; and when you fairly consider the cause and spring of their behaviour, you ought to feel the importance it is to us all to have your mind easy and your health well and carefully attended to; forgive me, therefore, for exhorting you to exert that fortitude in case of your being disappointed in meeting M. D'Orvilliers again, which has so deservedly acquired you the affection, the attachment, and confidence of the most respectable men of your profession.

"I hope you will not think I have transgressed your instructions by sending to the Duke of Rich-

mond and the Marquis a copy of Lieutenant Hawke's letter to you, under the same restrictions as you entrusted me with it, or that I have acted indiscreetly in communicating to them the purport of your letter of the 9th of September, having had an opportunity of transmitting them by a safe hand.

"The Duchess unites her most cordial wishes with mine for everything that can contribute to your honour, prosperity, and satisfaction; and desires me to tell you that the little puppy improves daily in beauty and merit.

"Believe me, my dear Sir, with the most sincere regard and attachment,

"Your most faithful and obedient servant,

"PORTLAND."

THE DUKE OF RICHMOND TO ADMIRAL KEPPEL.

"Goodwood, October 2nd, 1778.

"MY DEAREST ADMIRAL,—I have many thanks to return for your kind letter; it is sufficient for me to know that you think well of my nephew, Lord Charles Fitzgerald, to be persuaded that you will do what is right by him.

"I should have wrote to you before, but thought it very uncertain where or when my letter might find you. As I hear the Duke of Portland is not far from Plymouth, I send this to him; he may have a safe opportunity of forwarding it to you.

"I am sorry, my dearest Admiral, that you should think it necessary to mention to me, the approbation you have received from your brother Admirals. It is not because I am your near relation, and most attached friend, that I say, *I am sure that everything which good conduct could do, was done by you,* but because every man I ever knew in the navy agrees in your being the first man in it. To be sure, you have undertaken a most difficult task, to act under Ministers who you know will betray you, if they can ease themselves of the least blame by throwing it on you. You have also undertaken a command on which the existence of your country depends, when as much prudence as courage is required, and yet with a public which is insensible of its danger, and which expects an English fleet to be sure of meeting an enemy that avoids them, and to be certain of victory, whether circumstances permit or not, and whether the force is sufficient or not. To content that uncertain public is more the effect of good luck than good conduct; but the approbation of all thinking men you will have, as you deserve. There is only one point in which, perhaps, I differ from you: I would not stir without peremptory and distinct orders; nor should even the salvation of my country tempt me to go to sea without them. For much as a man owes his country, I do not think he owes them the risk of his honour, which is always

in danger when he trusts it into such hands as those of the present Ministry.

"I dare say you will now be blamed for not having met the French fleet, and letting them return to Brest. But your intelligence, and the steps you have taken to meet with them, will clear you. I think, however, it might not be amiss, if, after having sent them, you require either approbation or censure, and positively declare you will not return to sea without the one or the other.

"I am sorry the French have escaped you, because I think you would have given a good account of them; because I always fear the Spaniards joining them; and because I doubt you will be obliged by your health not to undertake a winter's cruise in the Bay, or that, if you do, your health will greatly suffer. But events like these in war are not at our disposal. It is peculiar to your profession to wait long for those opportunities which, when they do come, amply repay the patience they have cost.

"One comfort you will have on all occasions, that no man's character stands higher in the world than yours, and that no man has friends more zealously and inviolably attached than you have. Your good mother was here for a fortnight, ever anxious for your welfare, but in other respects tolerably well.

"Adieu, my dearest Admiral! You know that it is impossible to love you better, or to be more sincerely attached to you than I am.

"Ever yours,

"RICHMOND."

"My best compliments to Faulkner and Mr. Rogers."

After a fruitless search of two months for the enemy, Admiral Keppel returned with his fleet, on the 26th of October, to Portsmouth.

CHAPTER IV.

ADMIRAL KEPPEL'S DISPUTE WITH SIR HUGH PALLISER—PARLIAMENTARY PROCEEDINGS—CHARGES AGAINST KEPPEL—HAWKE'S REMONSTRANCE TO THE KING.

Newspaper attack upon Sir Hugh Palliser—He calls upon Keppel to contradict it—Captain Jervis's letter to Keppel thereupon—The Admiral's answer—Correspondence—Parliamentary proceedings—Sir Hugh Palliser exhibits five capital charges against Keppel, who is told to prepare for a court-martial—The remonstrance of Lord Hawke, and eleven other admirals, to the King.

1778.

A FEW days before the arrival of the fleet in England, the following paragraph appeared in the "Morning Intelligencer:"—

"The principal cause of Mr. Keppel's not re-attacking the French, at half-past three in the afternoon, (being at this time totally refitted from the damages sustained in the morning,) was Sir H—P——r's not joining him, agreeable to signal to form the line, he being at that time four miles to windward with his division. Mr. Keppel, observing a non-compliance, made other signals for the respective ships of Sir H——'s division to bear down

to him, which, in complying with, Sir H—— called them back into his wake.

"Captain Laforey, of the Ocean, distressed how to act, in consequence of this counter-order, sailed up to Sir H—— to ask him whom he was to obey. Mr. Keppel still observing that division continuing to windward, and neither of them obeying the signal, made one for the Fox, Captain Windsor, to come to him; and desired him to go, with his compliments to Sir H——, that his signal had been unremittedly kept up for him and his division to form the line; he supposed they did not see it, as they had not complied with it, and that they only waited for him and his division coming down, to renew the action. It was night before the division did come down, so the occasion was lost by the French disappearing next morning. Mr. Keppel's situation is not to be expressed when he found himself defeated in the fair prospect he had.

"These facts will appear in every log-book in the fleet; so that if an inquiry into this affair was to take place, his conduct would bear the strictest scrutiny, as hitherto no visible reason has appeared as an excuse in Sir H—— P—— for not complying. Sir Robert Harland's division and Mr. Keppel's, who had sustained, to all appearance, as much damage as Sir H——, those two divisions were refitted for action at the time above mentioned, and Sir H—— had not repaired his, lying all the time with his fore-topsail shattered, and not refitted.

"The damage sustained of loss of men on board Sir H—— was chiefly owing to cartridges blowing up between decks."

Upon Admiral Keppel's arriving in London, Sir Hugh Palliser addressed him a letter, of which the following is an extract:—

"I think myself much entitled to have my conduct, on the day when we engaged with the French fleet, justified by you, sir, Commander-in-chief, from those foul aspersions. I have been expecting your offer to do it. I have waited for your coming to town to ask it. Being now informed of your arrival, I lose no time in desiring you will contradict those scandalous reports that have been propagated as before mentioned, by publishing in your own name the enclosed paper, which I have the honour to enclose herewith.

"I must beg the favour of your speedy answer, that my honour and reputation may not be further wounded by delays.

"I am, very respectfully, Sir, &c.,

"Hugh Palliser."

The paper which Admiral Keppel was requested to sign was as follows:—

"Having seen a paragraph in the 'Morning Intelligencer,' of the 5th of last month, highly reflecting on the conduct of the Vice-Admiral of the

Blue, on the 27th of July last, when the fleet under my command engaged the French fleet, and the Vice-Admiral having informed me that reports, to the same purpose, have been propagated by some officers of the Victory, I think it necessary, in justice to Sir Hugh Palliser, to publish to the world that his conduct on that day was in every respect proper, and becoming a good officer. And I further declare that when I made the signal in the evening for the ships to windward to bear down into my wake, and afterwards, for particular ships of Sir Hugh's division to do so, he repeated those signals properly; and that the calling his and Sir Robert Harland's division into my wake in the evening was not for the purpose of renewing the battle *at that time*, but to be in readiness for it in the morning; that in obedience to the said signals, such of the ships of Sir Hugh Palliser's division as were in condition for it, did immediately bear down, as did the rest so soon as they were able; so that Sir Hugh Palliser and his whole division were all in my wake accordingly by the next morning before daylight, ready for action."

To this, Keppel returned no answer.

The next morning, Sir Hugh Palliser called upon the Admiral and requested him to sign the foregoing paper. Keppel refused, and Sir Hugh Palliser immediately went to the office of the

"Morning Post,"* a paper professedly in the interest of Lord Sandwich, and gave his own version of the engagement.

This publication produced the following letter. The writer, it should be remembered, was one of Keppel's seconds in the action, and therefore a competent judge of his commander's behaviour:—

CAPTAIN JERVIS TO ADMIRAL KEPPEL.

"Portsmouth, November 8th, 1778.

"SIR,—I have read, with a mixture of contempt and indignation, the publication in the 'Morning Post,' signed 'H. Palliser.' It is replete with vanity, art, and falsehood, and, though I agree with the rest of your friends, that it would be unbecoming your exalted character and station to write in a newspaper, I am clearly of an opinion the public should be undeceived somehow.

"The whole insinuation to your prejudice is furnished by the delicacy you shewed, both in the

* The Editor of the "Morning Post" was the Rev. Henry Bate, a man who, the previous year, had acquired some notoriety by fighting a duel with Captain Stony, at the Adelphi Tavern. The Duke of Richmond stated, in the House of Lords, and appealed to the Lord Chancellor for the truth of his assertion, that some members of the administration, and one in particular, (supposed to mean Lord Sandwich, see Almon's Debates, vol. xv. p. 297,) had applied to the Chancellor "to bestow on this base libeller one of the best livings in his gift that should become vacant, as a reward for his dirty work"—a fact which the Lord Chancellor did not deny. One member of the administration spoke of the editor as "a *miscreant* whom he held in the greatest abhorrence, contempt, and detestation."

In 1781, he was sentenced to one year's imprisonment for a libel on the Duke of Richmond.

morning and afternoon of the 27th, to this doughty champion. It was evident to me, and to every seaman in the Foudroyant, that you made the signal for the ships of his division to chase to windward in the morning, for the sole purpose of flogging him up; and his conduct shewed that he accepted it so, for though the Formidable's signal was not made, she set her top-gallant sails. The French fleet was *not in a regular well-connected line;* on the contrary, the centre and rear were in the utmost disorder, and every ship that composed them, except those who studiously kept out of the influence of the fire of our centre, was most damnably licked before they got the length of the Formidable. The shot from the Duc de Chartres' ship came over and under us, and we did not return their sallies.

"I deny, positively, that any ship in the fleet was more disabled in masts, sails, rigging, and hull, than the Foudroyant, though I have never boasted of it; on the contrary, I have always suppressed it, and yet she was in her station astern of the Victory, a little after three o'clock, and would have made a better figure than she did in the morning had the action been renewed.

"The delicacy you repeated to this gentleman in the afternoon has encouraged him to suggest that the reason of your not making the Formidable's signal with the rest, was her apparent incapacity to obey it. Admitting the fact, why did not you shift your flag, Sir Hugh?

"Upon the whole, my conclusion is, that, though his courage is indisputable, and I can even acquit him of treachery to you, in that day's business, a more direct disobedience of signals and orders, and a grosser *negligence* in not doing his utmost to support and enable the Commander-in-chief to renew the attack on the enemy was never proved against any man in the record of naval transactions than, to the best of my judgment and knowledge, could be proved against him; and, without knowing the cause, I ascribe it to the confusion and disorder created by the direful effects of the explosion.

"I am, &c., J. JERVIS."

ADMIRAL KEPPEL TO CAPTAIN JERVIS.

"November 9th, 1778.

"DEAR JERVIS,—I should not trouble you with a letter if it was not to thank you for your obliging attention. My line of conduct, from the beginning to the end of this business, satisfies my feelings the more I think of it; generosity towards a bad man is ill-placed, but the act is the same thing.*

*. Prior to the unhappy difference with Admiral Keppel, Sir Hugh Palliser was much esteemed in his profession. Charnock speaks of him as "a skilful seaman and able officer." He served as lieutenant in Matthews' action off Toulon, in 1746. While commander of a small sloop, he captured four French privateers; and in 1757, as Captain of the Eagle, of sixty guns, took a French East Indiaman, after a smart engagement. At the siege of Quebec, he commanded the body of seamen who took possession of the lower town. Anson, Boscawen, and Saunders, had the highest opinion of

"Sir Hugh wrote me a letter calling upon me to support his character, and to sign a justification of it in the newspapers. I received him at my house, and, with some warmth, told him that if I could bring myself to such an act, the paper he had sent me contained untruth; in point of fact, that I would *sign no paper* whatever. I referred him to my public letters. He was very high upon his own merits, and threw out that, in justifying himself, he must lay blame where it belonged. I flew, with warmth, close to him, and dared his insinuation—almost said he ought not to keep it from the public. Admiral Campbell told him, if such was his opinion, it was a crime to have kept it so long back. In fact, I believe I was quite rude, and left him to go to Sir John Moore in another room. I told him I had done with him, and would never have the least to do with him again. I have told the King, without aspersing his character one way or the other, that I would not serve where he should be. I have told it in plain terms to Lord S———.

"The danger of answering Sir H. Palliser's production, is, furnishing him with facts which he is now ignorant of, as appears by his narration;

Palliser as an officer; and so, indeed, had Keppel, who, prior to their disagreement, was in the constant habit of corresponding with him. An anonymous writer says of Palliser, "As a professional man, he was found superior to most of his cotemporaries in maritime skill; judicious in his dispositions, and decisive in their consequent operations; in private life, conciliating in his manners and unshaken in his friendships." The foregoing pages do not quite warrant the latter assumption.

but the matter must not end with the 'Morning Post.' I am in full confidence of the honesty of two or three of my friends; their opinion and advice for method I shall stand in need of, and shall hope to see them before the meeting of Parliament, for when my warm friends are found out, some method will be contrived to detach them upon service.

"I have, hitherto, kept my thoughts from being too much troubled. I hope to continue in the same way, but the under-hand ——— of the wicked, in the present business, is very trying.

"Sincerely, &c., A. KEPPEL.

"P.S. You must pay postage for this letter that you may get it safely."

DUKE OF RICHMOND TO ADMIRAL KEPPEL.

"Goodwood, Sunday Morning, November 15th, 1778.

"MY DEAREST ADMIRAL,—I should have answered your first letter, but was detained at Brighthelmstone by a severe fit of the rheumatism, which had once got into my stomach, and was, with difficulty, removed. I am now much better, and arrived here on Friday. Having spent most of my summer as a drill sergeant with the Sussex Militia at Brighthelmstone, I have a little business to settle here before I go to town for the meeting of Parliament. Part of my militia, now quartered at Chichester, also require my attention to see them settled before I leave

them; for these reasons it would be inconvenient for me to be in London before Tuesday the 24th, but on that day you may depend upon me, or, if you have occasion for me sooner, I will go to London on Sunday the 22nd, for few other considerations are equal to the satisfaction I should have in being of the least use to you.

"I can make but few or no remarks on Sir Hugh Palliser's production, because I neither understand his language nor the subject; but I have long suspected that gentleman of not being the man you and Sir Charles Saunders seemed to think him.

"I doubt I shall not be able to supply Elden with beech-mast this year, as it is not a mast year, for the beeches bear mast seldom above once in four years—I mean, in any quantity to make it worth while to collect them.

"I am very happy to hear that your health has so well supported the amazing fatigues, both of body and mind, which so long, so rough a cruise, and attended with so much anxiety, must have occasioned. Persevere, my dearest Admiral, in that steady calmness of mind, and do not let the attacks of such a man as Sir Hugh disturb you; it will, however, require you to be on your guard against him, as he is, perhaps, one of the most artful men living; but taking care not to be tricked, you may be sure that your own upright conduct will baffle him; and, although you have been deceived in one man, you may be satisfied that no man living has more real

friends left than you have. Among the foremost, and most zealously attached, believe your sincere humble servant, "RICHMOND, &c."

On the re-assembling of Parliament, in November, Lord Bristol, in the House of Lords, strongly opposed the Address, and urged the necessity of previously instituting an inquiry into the conduct of the commanders in the late naval engagement off Brest.

Lord Sandwich, in reply, opposed the inquiry, and endeavoured to defend Sir Hugh Palliser.

Lord Shelburne, in a long and able speech, which closed the debate, supported Lord Bristol's proposition.

The flattering allusions to Keppel in this speech, which was of two hours duration, were so congenial to the feelings of those assembled at the bar, that they beat their canes on the floor in testimony of their approbation. The House was, in consequence, ordered to be immediately cleared.

In the debate in the House of Commons, on the 2nd of December, a very animated discussion was opened by the Honourable Temple Luttrell, on the difference between the two admirals, when Keppel found himself obliged to explain at some length, the circumstances that had led to the action, and those which had arisen out of it, expressing his surprise that an officer under his command should have made an appeal to the public in a newspaper, signed with his name, before any accusation had been made against him, which tended to

render him odious and despicable in the eyes of his countrymen, and making an allusion to the Vice-Admiral as the author. This elicited a speech from Sir Hugh Palliser, who attempted to justify himself—denied the report of his not obeying signals—and expressed his willingness to abide a Parliamentary inquiry, or a public trial. Admiral Keppel replied, disapproving of the use that had been made of private conversations which had passed between them in his own house, and still thought the Vice-Admiral's letter in the newspaper so extremely improper as to fix him in his resolution never to go to sea with that officer again. He denied having made indirect charges, nor did he know any part of the Vice-Admiral's conduct *deserving of censure* but his seeing the name of "Hugh Palliser" signed to a letter in the "Morning Post."*

"The Vice-Admiral had alluded to signals, and said that it was no fault of his that the fleet of France was not re-attacked. As to that, he could only say that he presumed every inferior officer was to obey the signals of his commander, and now, when called upon to speak out, he would inform the House and the public, that the signal for coming into the Victory's wake was flying from

* The words in italics were underlined by Keppel. In his edition of "Almon's Debates" is the following note in his own hand-writing: "Ill-related,—Admiral Keppel, in all he said this day, avoided even suspecting Sir H. Palliser's want of courage, but, in every other part, left him to defend himself."

three o'clock in the afternoon till eight o'clock in the evening unobeyed."

Seven days after this debate, Admiral Keppel received, from the Secretary of the Admiralty, the following letter, together with a copy of five charges of misconduct, all tending to affect his life:—

PHILIP STEPHENS, ESQ., TO ADMIRAL KEPPEL.

"Admiralty Office, December 9th, 1778.

"Sir,—Sir Hugh Palliser, Vice-Admiral of the Blue Squadron of his Majesty's fleet, having, in his letter of this day's date, transmitted to my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty a charge of misconduct and neglect of duty against you, on the 27th and 28th of July, 1778, in divers instances therein mentioned, and desired that a court-martial may be held for the trying you for the same; and their Lordships intending that a court-martial shall be held for that service, I have it in command from them to send you herewith a copy of the said charge, that you may be preparing for your defence.

"I have the honour to be, sir, &c.,

"Ph. Stephens."

ADMIRAL KEPPEL'S REPLY.

"Audley Square, Dec. 10th, 1778.

"Sir,—I have received your letter of yesterday's date, informing me, that 'Sir Hugh Palliser, Vice-Admiral of the Blue Squadron of his Majesty's Fleet, had, in his letter of that day's date, trans-

mitted, &c.' I must beg of you to inform their Lordships that to so very extraordinary a proceeding I can, for the present, only say that I must take some time for consideration before I can return any other answer than that I have received your letter. "I am, sir, &c.,

"A. KEPPEL."

The same evening, he dispatched a second letter:

ADMIRAL KEPPEL TO PHILIP STEPHENS, ESQ.

"Audley Square, Thursday night, Dec. 10th, 1778.

"SIR,—The very extraordinary contents of your letter of last night, made it impossible for me on a sudden to make any other answer than a bare acknowledgment of having received it; but it has not required much time to determine me, in justice to my own reputation, to inform you that I am willing to meet a court-martial whenever the Board of Admiralty shall think proper to order one.

"At the same time, sir, I desire you will represent to the Lords Commissioners my utter astonishment at the countenance their Lordships have so far given to this proceeding as to resolve, on the same day on which such a charge is exhibited, to order a court-martial against the Commander-in-Chief of the fleet, on an attack from an inferior officer, under all the very peculiar circumstances in which Sir Hugh Palliser now stands.

"I am, sir, &c, A. KEPPEL."

The following day, the Secretary of the Admiralty writes—

"I am commanded by their Lordships (the Commissioners of the Admiralty) to acquaint you that they propose to order a court-martial to be assembled on Thursday the 7th of January next, if you think you shall be ready with your evidence by that time; but if not their Lordships will order it to be held on a later day.

"As to the astonishment you express at the countenance you conceive their Lordships have given to this proceeding, by resolving, on the same day on which the charge was exhibited, to order a court-martial, their Lordships order me to acquaint you that they know of no instance in which the Board of Admiralty, upon receiving a specific charge of such a nature, signed by an officer of rank, serving under the party accused, and accompanied with the request for the assembling a court-martial thereupon, have delayed coming to a resolution to order one, nor would they have thought themselves justified if they had hesitated to take the necessary steps for bringing the matter to an early and legal decision.

"I have the honour to be, sir, &c.,

"PH. STEPHENS."

After the receipt of this letter, Admiral Keppel repaired to the House of Commons.

Mr. Temple Luttrell, in a speech of much ability,

moved an address to the King, to pray that his Majesty would be pleased to order a court-martial on Sir Hugh Palliser. The motion was seconded by Sir Joseph Mawbey.

Sir Hugh Palliser, who was sitting next to Lord North, on the Treasury bench, then rose, and with much acrimony attacked the Admiral's conduct. Some observations followed from Lord North, Sir William Meredith, and Lord John Cavendish. Keppel rose, and after thanking his friends on every side of the house for the friendly feeling they exhibited towards him, stated that he had been publicly accused—specific charges of neglect and incapacity had been lodged at the Admiralty Board, and that in consequence he had had notice to prepare for a court-martial. He professed his readiness to meet inquiry, and in conclusion said, "Thank God I am not the accuser, but the accused. I was called out to serve my country at a very critical period; I have performed my duty to the best of my abilities, and whatever the issue may be, I have one consolation—that I have acted strictly to the best of my judgment. I shall decline saying a syllable to the question, and, as I cannot think of voting, shall quit the House."

At each period of this speech he was greeted with the loudest applause, and retired amidst the cheers of the whole House, accompanied by a large body of the members.

Sir Joseph Mawbey thought the whole matter had the appearance of a preconcerted scheme to ruin the Admiral. He hoped and trusted that so black, malignant, and treacherous a step to strip one of the brightest naval characters this country could ever boast of, would meet with the honest indignation it merited, and finally lead to the detection of the authors of so infamous a project.

In the course of this debate, Burke emphatically asked, "Was this the return Admiral Keppel was to meet with, after forty years painful and laborious service, and after being in ten capital engagements, or important conflicts, in every one of which he had, either as possessed of the sole command or acting in a subordinate character, acquitted himself with the highest honour and reputation? Was it an adequate return for a person of his rank and consequence, standing forth, as the favourite selected champion of his country, in the moment of danger and difficulty? He desired no return but that which he had already earned, and was sure of receiving without diminution—a return which it was not in the power of the Admiralty to bestow or withhold—an inward consciousness of having performed his duty."

The effect produced upon the House by Keppel's speech, will appear by the following letter from the celebrated General Fitz Patrick to his brother:—

THE HON. R. FITZ PATRICK TO THE EARL OF OSSORY.

"December, 1778; Saturday.

"DEAR BROTHER,—I am very sorry, as you will be, that you did not come to town, for we had yesterday the most interesting debate I ever remember to have heard. You will see an account of it in the newspapers. The House was violently disposed to Keppel, who spoke like a man inspired, and no tool was bold enough to venture one word in favour of Palliser. The Admiralty have certainly taken a step that is not defensible, and it can hardly be believed that Lord Sandwich would have been so hasty as to order a court-martial if he had not wished ill to Keppel. I saw the Duchess at the opera tonight, and she sees the thing in the proper light. I asked her if she had seen Sandwich, and she said she had not been there yet this year. The court-martial is ordered for the 7th of January. What opposition will do upon the subject is not yet decided; but I think we must have a strong question against the Admiralty. I think last night we should have carried any question. Palliser's conduct, to be sure, is the most atrocious that ever was heard of.

"The post is waiting for this letter; so, adieu.

"Yours affectionately, R. FITZ PATRICK."

On the 16th, Admiral Pigot brought in a bill to enable the Admiralty to hold the court-martial upon Admiral Keppel on shore. The plea for this motion

was the bad state of the Admiral's health. He stated that his illness had been such as to cause great alarm to his friends, but that his anxiety to serve his country had prevailed over every other consideration, and had induced him to leave his chamber to take upon him the command of the fleet in the moment of public danger; that now, by a most unaccountable change of affairs, that officer, who put his health and character to hazard for the sake of saving his country, would be obliged in a very short time, to hold up his hand as a criminal, and to stand his trial for his life.

The bill passed the Commons without opposition, and was brought into the Lords by the Duke of Bolton, who moved that it should be read a first time. It had gone through the other House, and received its sanction through its respective stages in one day. It was a mode of proceeding he acknowledged unusual, but not unprecedented. He trusted that the motives for bringing in the bill would render any explanation from him unnecessary. It was his intention, therefore, that after his present motion should be complied with, to move to have the bill read a second time, to move for its commitment, to be reported, read a third time, and passed.

The question, on the first reading, was then put and carried. The bill was opposed in another stage by the Lord Chancellor, (Thurlow,) upon the plea that Admiral Keppel's bad state of health had not been proved; but the Marquess of Rockingham said

"he presumed that there was not a single Lord present acquainted with Admiral Keppel, who was ignorant that he had for several years been in a very poor and precarious state of health. He remembered he saw him in the House of Commons the night the motion was made respecting the Vice-Admiral, when he went off with a glory of conscious innocence around his head. There was not a person that was present who could have quitted the House with more seeming celerity, strength, dignity, and manly vigour than he did, yet he dined with him the same evening, and such was the strange precariousness and vicissitude of his spirits, though only an hour elapsed since he saw him leave the House of Commons, that he took half an hour to get up from the ground floor to the dining-room, being in the interim afflicted with the severest pains from cramp in both his legs."

The conduct of the Admiralty in appointing the court-martial gave the highest disgust to all ranks in the navy. Twelve British admirals, at the head of which was Keppel's old commander, the veteran Hawke, drew up the following Memorial, which was presented to the King by the Duke of Bolton :—

"We, the undersigned Admirals of your Majesty's Royal Navy, having hitherto, on all occasions, served your Majesty with zeal and fidelity, and being desirous of devoting every action of our lives, and our lives themselves, to your Majesty's service, and the defence of our country, think ourselves indispensably bound by our duty to that service and that country, with all possible humility, to represent to your wisdom and justice—

"That, Sir Hugh Palliser, Vice-Admiral of the Blue, lately serving under the command of the Honourable Augustus Keppel, did prefer certain articles of accusation, containing several matters of heinous offence against his said Commander-in-chief, to the Lords Commissioners for executing the office of Lord High Admiral of Great Britain, he, the said Sir Hugh Palliser, being himself a Commissioner in the said Commission; this accusation he, the said Sir Hugh Palliser, withheld from the twenty-seventh of July last, the time of the supposed offences committed, until the ninth day of this present December, and then brought forward, for the purpose of recrimination against charges, conjectured by him, the said Sir Hugh Palliser, but which, in fact, were never made.

"That the Commissioners of the Admiralty, near five months after the pretended offences aforesaid, did receive from their said colleague in office, the charge made by him against his said Commander; and without taking into consideration the relative situation of the accuser and the party accused, or attending to the avowed motives of the accusation, or the length of time of withholding, or the occasion of making the same, and without any other deliberation whatever, did, on the very same day on which the charge was preferred, and without previous notice to the party accused of an intention of making a charge against him, give notice of their intending that a court-martial should be held on the said Admiral Keppel, after forty years of meritorious service, and a variety of actions, in which he had exerted eminent courage and conduct, by which the honour and power of this nation, and the glory of the British flag had been maintained and increased in various parts of the world.

"We beg leave to express to your Majesty our concern at this proceeding, and to represent our apprehensions of the difficulties and discouragements which will inevitably arise to your service therefrom; and that it will not be easy for men attentive to their honour to serve your Majesty, particularly in situations of principal command, if the practice now stated to your Majesty be countenanced, or the principles upon which the same has been supported shall prevail with any Lord High Admiral or with any Commissioner for executing that office.

"We are humbly of opinion that a criminal charge against

an officer (rising in importance according to the rank and command of that officer) which suspends his service to your Majesty, perhaps in the most critical exigencies of the public affairs, which calls his reputation into doubt and discussion, which puts him on trial for his life, profession, and reputation; and which, in its consequences, may cause a fatal cessation in the naval exertions of the kingdom, to be a matter of the most serious nature, and never to be made by authority but on solid ground, and on mature deliberation. The honour of an officer is his most precious possession and best qualification; the public have an interest in it: and whilst those under whom we serve countenance accusation, it is often impossible to restore military fame by the mere acquittal of a court-martial. Imputations made by high authority remain long, and affect deeply. The sphere of action of the commanders-in-chief is large, and their business intricate, and subject to great variety of opinion; and before they are put on the judgment of others for acts done upon their discretion, the greatest discretion ought to be employed.

"Whether the Board of Admiralty hath by law any such discretion, we, who are not of the profession of the law, cannot positively assert; but if we had conceived that this Board had no legal use of their reason in a point of such delicacy and importance, we should have known on what terms we served; but we never did imagine it possible that we were to receive orders from, and be accountable to, those who by law were reduced to become passive instruments to the possible malice, ignorance, or treason, of any individual who might think fit to disarm his Majesty's navy of its best and highest officers. We conceive it disrespectful to the laws of our country to suppose them capable of such manifest injustice and absurdity.

"We therefore humbly represent, in behalf of public order, as well as of the discipline of the navy, to your Majesty, the dangers of long-concealed and afterwards precipitately adopted charges, and all recriminatory accusations of subordinate officers against their commanders-in-chief, and particularly the mischief and scandal of permitting men, who are at once in high civil office and in subordinate military command, previous to their making such accusations to attempt to corrupt

the public judgment, by the publication of libels on their officers in a common newspaper, thereby exciting mutiny in your Majesty's navy, as well as prejudicing the minds of those who are to try the merits of the accusation against the said superior officer.

"Hawke.	Bristol.
John Moore.*	James Young.‡
Bolton.	Matthew Barton.§
Samuel Graves.†	Francis Geary.‖
Hugh Pigot.	Shuldham.
Robert Harland.	Clark Gayton.¶"

* Sir John Moore was one of the members of Byng's court-martial. In 1759, he captured the island of Guadaloupe.

† This officer distinguished himself at the siege of Carthagena. He commanded the Duke, in Hawke's action with Conflans. At the close of 1777, he was appointed to the chief command at Plymouth, an office which he shortly afterwards resigned.

‡ Admiral Young served as a midshipman, with Keppel, on board the Gloucester, in 1738. He commanded the Mars in Hawke's action with Conflans. He died in 1789.

§ Admiral Barton commanded the Lichfield in Keppel's expedition against Goree, when he was unfortunately wrecked. He also served under Keppel at Belleisle and the Havannah.

‖ Admiral Geary was created a Baronet in 1782. When a young man, in command of a twenty-gun sloop, he had entered into an engagement with a brother captain to share with him whatever prizes they might take during a given period. After the expiration of their partnership he captured a prize with a most valuable cargo, consisting of fifty-five chests of silver, and other rich commodities, which Captain Geary, nevertheless, divided equally with his friend, declaring that he was sure his brother officer would have acted in the same manner towards him.

¶ Gayton commanded the St. George at the taking of Guadaloupe, which was unanimously declared to be impregnable to any attack by sea, unsupported by some collateral aid. Captain Gayton represented the service as difficult and dangerous; upon which Commodore Moore sent him a written order to proceed on that service. Captain Gayton obeyed, and the attack was kept up for some hours with unremitted fury, but without a prospect of success. The Commo-

On receiving this memorial, the King said, that "he should always receive the representations of his Admirals with pleasure, and this, as it deserved, so it certainly should receive, his most serious attention." This, however, was all the notice it ever received.

It will be observed, that the name of Howe is not annexed to the foregoing memorial. This gallant officer, however, saw and highly approved of its contents, but was deterred from signing it from motives of delicacy, he being then in expectation that an inquiry would be instituted in the House of Commons, respecting his own conduct in America.

Another memorial, to the same effect, was likewise signed by a very numerous body of naval captains, but was not presented, it being deemed more to the honour of Admiral Keppel that his conduct should be fully investigated, and laid before the public in its true colours.

Walpole thus alludes to Keppel's situation, in a letter to Lady Browne:—"Poor Lady Albemarle is indeed very miserable, and full of apprehensions, though the incredible zeal of the navy for Admiral Keppel crowns him with glory, and the indignation of mankind, and the execration of Sir Hugh, add to

dore then made the signal to haul off, which being disregarded, a boat was sent with a verbal order to cease firing; but the Captain, instead of obeying, returned for answer that he would not do so without a *written order*. In the interim, the fire from the citadel ceased, and thus the dispute closed.

the triumph. Indeed, I still think Lady A.'s fears may be well founded: some slur may be *procured* on her son; and his own bad nerves and worse constitution may not be able to stand agitation and suspense."

CHAPTER V.

COURT-MARTIAL ON ADMIRAL KEPPEL—REMARKS ON THE CHARGES—CASE FOR THE PROSECUTION.

Keppel goes to Portsmouth to be tried—Is accompanied by a large assemblage of friends—Enthusiastically received—Remarks upon the charges exhibited against him—Assembling of the court-martial—Conduct of Sir Hugh Palliser—Captains Marshall and Allen's testimony in favour of Keppel—Alterations in Captain Hood's and Sir Hugh Palliser's Log-books—Conduct of Lord Mulgrave—Case for the prosecution closed—Sir Hugh wishes to enter upon fresh matter—Is overruled by the court.

1779.

On the 2nd of January, Keppel went to Portsmouth, having been previously taken into custody by the Provost Marshal, who was authorized to take his word of honour for his appearance there on the 7th instant.

He was shortly joined by many of his personal friends, among whom were, their Royal Highnesses the Dukes of Cumberland and Gloucester; the Dukes of Portland, Richmond, and Bolton; the Marquises of Rockingham and Granby; the Earl of Effingham; Messrs. Fox, Burke, and Sheridan; and a large number of naval officers. The Earl of Shelburne,

who was prevented by business from attending, sent the following letter:—

THE EARL OF SHELBURNE TO ADMIRAL KEPPEL.

"Bowood Park, 2nd of January, 1778 (1779).

"My dearest Admiral,—I will not trouble you with compliments at a time when I wish to know how to turn myself to render you more material service. You will have everything worth your attention and acceptance from us, in the person of Mr. Dunning. I shall be in London, proud and happy to receive your commands, however intimated, which I beg may depend upon your own convenience at the moment.

"I have the honour to be, with the most unalterable respect,

"Your faithful and most obedient servant,

"Shelburne."

At nine o'clock in the morning of the 7th, Sir Thomas Pye, President of the court-martial, hoisted his flag on board the Britannia.

The signal was then made for a court-martial, by hoisting the Union-jack in the larboard mizen shrouds.

The Royal standard was at the same time displayed from the starboard mizen shrouds, in token that an Admiral was to be tried.

At ten o'clock a gun was fired, and the Union-jack hoisted at the fore topmast head, as a signal for all admirals and captains to repair on board.

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Immediately the harbour presented a most animated sight; barges were to be seen in all directions, conveying the different officers whose attendance was required at the court-martial on board the Britannia. Palliser and Keppel quitted the shore about the same time: thirty barges, filled with sailors, accompanied the boat of the prisoner, while only four attended that of his accuser.

The court was formed of the following members:

PRESIDENT.

Sir Thomas Pye, Admiral of the White;

MEMBERS.

Matthew Buckle, Esq., Vice-Admiral of the Red;
John Montagu, Esq., Vice-Admiral of the Red;
Marriot Arbuthnot, Esq., Rear-Admiral of the White;
Robert Roddam, Esq., Rear-Admiral of the White.

CAPTAINS

M. Milbank,	William Bennet,
Fra. Sam. Drake,	Adam Duncan,
Taylor Penny,	Philip Boteler,
John Moutray,	James Cranston.

As soon as the members were sworn, the court adjourned to the Governor's house.

An immense multitude, composed chiefly of sailors, had assembled on the beach, to greet Admiral Keppel on his return, when they received him with reiterated cheers, which did not cease until his arrival at the Governor's house.

Walpole writes to General Conway, on the 9th of January—"I hear Admiral Keppel is in high

spirits with the great respect and zeal expressed for him. In my opinion, his constitution will not stand the struggle. I am very uneasy, too, for the Duke of Richmond, who is at Portsmouth, and will be at least as much agitated."*

It is not here intended to enter at any length upon the proceedings of the court, which occupy 182 folio pages, and extend over a period of five weeks; but merely to point out some of the leading incidents of this very remarkable trial.

When the court re-assembled, Sir Hugh Palliser's application to the Admiralty for the court-martial, together with the charge exhibited, were read. The charge was as follows:—

CHARGE.	REMARKS.
A Charge of Misconduct and Neglect of Duty, against the Honourable Admiral Keppel, on the 27th and 28th of July, 1778, in divers instances, as undermentioned:—	An eye-witness says, "Whilst the charges were reading, Admiral Keppel kept his eyes steadily fixed on Sir Hugh Palliser. His manner throughout was cheerful, firm, and easy, and strongly expressive of the most conscious innocence."
I. That on the morning of the 27th of July, 1778, having a fleet of thirty ships of the line under his command, and being then in the presence of a French fleet of the like number of ships of the line, the	I. It will be observed, that if Admiral Keppel had been found guilty of the first count of the charge, the court had a discretionary power as to the sentence of capital punish-

* Letters of Horace Walpole, vol. vi. p. 84.

CHARGE.

said Admiral did not make the necessary preparation for fight, did not put his fleet into a line of battle, or into any order proper either for receiving or attacking an enemy of such force; but, on the contrary, although his fleet was already dispersed and in disorder, he, by making the signal for several ships of the Vice-Admiral of the Blue division to chase to windward, increased the disorder of that part of his fleet, and the ships were in consequence more scattered than they had been before; and whilst in this disorder, he advanced to the enemy, and made the signal for battle: that the above conduct was the more unaccountable, as the enemy's fleet was not then in disorder, nor beaten, nor flying, but formed in a regular line of battle on that tack which approached the British fleet, all their motions plainly indicating a design to give battle, and they edged down and attacked it whilst in disorder. By this unofficer-like

REMARKS.

ment; but the remaining four, if proved, would have left the members no alternative but to condemn the prisoner to death. The first article charged him with "not making the necessary preparation for fight," which brought him under the 10th Article of War.*

* 10*th Article of War.*—Every flag-officer, captain, and commander in the fleet, who, upon signal or order of fight, or sight of any ship or ships which it may be his duty to engage, or who, upon likelihood of engagement, shall not make the necessary preparations for fight, and shall not, in his own person, and according to his place, encourage the inferior officers and men to fight courageously, shall suffer death, or such other punishment as, from the nature and degree of the offence, a court-martial shall deem him to deserve; and if any person in the fleet shall treacherously or cowardly yield, or call for quarter, every person so offending, and being convicted thereof by the sentence of a court-martial, shall suffer death.

CHARGE.	REMARKS.
conduct, a general engagement was not brought on, but the other flag-officers and captains were left to engage without order or regularity, from which great confusion ensued; some of his ships were prevented getting into action at all, others were not near enough to the enemy, and some, from the confusion, fired into others of the king's ships, and did them considerable damage; and the Vice-Admiral of the Blue was left alone to engage, singly and unsupported. In these instances, the said Admiral Keppel negligently performed the duty imposed on him.	
II. That after the van and centre divisions of the British fleet passed the rear of the enemy, the Admiral did not immediately tack and double upon the enemy with these two divisions, and continue the battle; nor did he collect them together at that time, and keep so near the enemy to renew the battle as soon as it might be proper: on the contrary, he stood away beyond the enemy to a great distance before he wore to stand towards them again, leaving the Vice-Admiral of the Blue engaged with the enemy, and exposed to be cut off.	The second article accused him of "not tacking and doubling on the enemy, whereby he left Sir Hugh Palliser exposed to be cut off;" which brought him under the 12th Article.*

* *12th Article of War.*—Every person in the fleet who, through cowardice, negligence, or disaffection, shall, in time of action, withdraw, or keep back, or not come into the fight or engagement, or

CHARGE.

III. That after the Vice-Admiral of the Blue had passed the last of the enemy's ships, and immediately wore, and laid his own ship's head towards the enemy again, being then in their wake, and at a little distance only, and expecting the Admiral to advance with all the ships to renew the fight, the Admiral did not advance for that purpose, but shortened sail, hauled down the signal for battle; nor did he at that time, or at any other time, whilst standing towards the enemy, call the ships together, in order to renew the attack, as he might have done, particularly the Vice-Admiral of the Red and his division, which had received the least damage, had been the longest out of action, were ready and fit to renew it, were then to windward, and could have bore down and fetched any part of the French fleet, if the signal for battle had not been hauled down, or if the said Admiral Keppel had availed himself of the signal appointed by the Thirty-first Article of the Fighting Instructions, by which he might have ordered those to lead who are to lead with the starboard tacks on board, by a wind,

REMARKS.

The third article charged him with "not doing the utmost in his power to sink, burn, or destroy the enemy," which also came under the 12th Article of War, and was that upon which the sentence of Byng was framed.

shall not do his utmost to take or destroy every ship which it shall be his duty to engage, and to assist and relieve all and every of his Majesty's ships, or those of his allies, which it shall be his duty to assist and relieve; every such person so offending, and being convicted thereof by the sentence of a court-martial, shall suffer death.

CHARGE.

which signal was applicable to the occasion for renewing the engagement with advantage, after the French fleet had been beaten, their line broken, and in disorder. In these instances he did not do the utmost in his power to take, sink, burn, or destroy the French fleet that had attacked the British fleet.

IV. That instead of advancing to renew the engagement, as in the preceding Articles is alleged, and as he might and ought to have done, the Admiral wore and made sail directly from the enemy, and thus he led the whole British fleet away from them, which gave them the opportunity to rally unmolested, and to form again into a line of battle, and to stand after the British fleet. This was disgraceful to the British flag, for it had the appearance of a flight, and gave the French Admiral a pretence to claim the victory, and to publish to the world that the British fleet ran away, and that he pursued it with the fleet of France, and offered it battle.

V. That in the morning of the 28th of July, 1778, when it was perceived that only three of the French fleet remained near the British, in the situation the whole had been in the night before, and that the rest were to leeward, at a greater

REMARKS.

The fourth was a similar charge, only expressed in stronger terms, for it accused the Admiral of flying from a pursuing enemy.

The fifth and last charge stated, that "the Admiral did not cause the fleet to pursue the flying enemy." This had reference to the 13th Article of War.*

* 13*th Article of War*.—Every person in the fleet who, through cowardice, negligence, or disaffection, shall forbear to pursue the chase

CHARGE. REMARKS.

distance, not in a line of battle, but in a heap, the Admiral did not cause the fleet to pursue the flying enemy, nor even to chase the three ships that fled after the rest; but, on the contrary, he led the British fleet another way directly from the enemy. By these instances of misconduct and neglect, a glorious opportunity was lost of doing a most essential service to the state, and the honour of the British navy was tarnished.

H. PALLISER.

As soon as the charge was read, Admiral Keppel requested that the Log-books of the several masters might be ordered to be delivered into court, and lie on the table for the inspection of the members. To this Sir Hugh Palliser raised an objection, which was overruled by the court. They then adjourned until the next day, at ten o'clock.

The oaths were administered to the masters, that the Log-book which each produced was the ship's original Log, without any alterations or additions since made, so far as related to entries from the 23rd to the 30th of July, inclusive. Arnold, the master of the Robuste, declined taking this oath, alleging that both alterations and additions had

of any enemy, pirate, or rebel, beaten or flying; or shall not relieve and assist a known friend in view to the utmost of his power; being convicted of any such offence, by the sentence of a court-martial, shall suffer death.

been made, by order of his captain, respecting what took place on the 27th and 28th of July, and that, too, since it was known that Admiral Keppel was to be tried.

The first witness on the part of the prosecution was Captain Marshall, who stated, in substance, what has already been given in the account of the action. As he was about to retire, Admiral Montagu said—

"I have one question to ask Captain Marshall:—From the day you first saw the French fleet to the time you lost sight of them, do you, from your own observation or knowledge, know of any act of the Commander-in-chief, Admiral Keppel, behaving or conducting himself unbecoming a flag officer?"

The question was strongly objected to by the prosecutor, who was overruled by the court, and it was again read to Captain Marshall. Here an eye-witness describes him as "labouring under the awful impression of the oath he had taken, and visibly agitated with the mixed sensations that arose at the moment in his breast, he solemnly raised his hands to heaven, fixed his eyes on his admiral, and, with a voice that spoke his feelings, cried out, '*No, as God is my judge!*' All reserve, all decorum due to the place, here gave way in the audience, and the sense of the assembled navy was fully discovered by an involuntary and universal burst of applause."

The same question as to Keppel's conduct in the

action was put to Sir William Burnaby, the Captain of the Milford, but he declined giving a direct answer, being so very young an officer in the service; at the same time he declared that "no one could entertain a higher opinion than he did of that worthy man."

The Court having endeavoured to obtain a more explicit answer, the prosecutor offered a written dissent to the proceedings of the Court, which he desired might be read by the Judge-advocate. The Court objected, and he then began to read it himself, but was stopped. The question was again read to Sir William Burnaby, but no answer being given, the Court desired his former replies to be entered in the minutes.

In the course of his cross-examination, Keppel asked, "Did I pursue the French fleet with a press of sail, conformable to the worst sailing ships with me, to close and get up to the French fleet, from the 24th in the morning till the moment I brought them to battle, except the two times I made the signal for a line of battle, after the 24th in the morning?"

To this the prosecutor objected, as a leading question. Keppel appealed to the Court, and said, "I must beg the indulgence of the Court that the accuser may not interrupt me. I am being tried for my life, and my honour, which is dearer to me than my life." The prosecutor observed, his honour

and character were as much at stake as the Admiral's. After much cavilling on the part of the prosecutor, the witness said "You always carried a press of sail, and gave every proof, in my judgment, of your very great desire to bring them to battle."

The next witness called was Captain Digby, of the Ramillies. At the conclusion of his evidence, Admiral Montagu repeated the question he had put to the preceding witnesses, as to the conduct of Keppel.

Captain Digby replied—

"I have always had the greatest esteem and the greatest opinion of Admiral Keppel as an officer. I have so still, but I have been giving evidence upon facts, and the answering that question would be judging upon them, which I have no right to do."

He was asked if he saw Keppel "run away from the French fleet instead of advancing to renew the engagement, 'as he might and ought to have done?' which are the words expressed in the charge."

Sir Hugh Palliser—"That the French say."

Admiral Montagu—"Then it is necessary we should inquire into it, to get the better of what the French have said."

As the question was about to be read, Mr. Hargrave, one of the prosecutor's counsel, advised him, in a whisper, to enter his dissent to the question on a point of law. This was overheard by some of the members of the court, and when Sir Hugh Palliser declared that their proceedings were illegal, Admiral Montagu exclaimed,

"We care not sixpence for the law in this case. We come here to do justice, and, in God's name, I hope and trust it will be done." Captain Digby not choosing to answer the question, Admiral Montagu observed, "If Admiral Keppel ran away, Captain Digby did so too, and, I suppose, every part of the fleet followed their leader. Did you," turning to Captain Digby, "that day run away from the French fleet?"

The answer, as may naturally be supposed, was "No."

It should be remembered that Keppel was charged with having "made sail directly from the enemy, and *led the whole British fleet away from them.*"

The Honourable Thomas Windsor, Captain of the Fox, stated that Admiral Keppel sent him to the Formidable with his compliments to Sir Hugh Palliser, and to tell him that he only waited for him and his division bearing down into his wake to renew the attack on the enemy. That at about half-past five he got to the Formidable, and when he was so close to her as to be becalmed by her sails, he twice repeated the message to Sir Hugh Palliser himself, who replied, "I understand you very well." That the Formidable then gave three cheers, which his ship's company returned.

Admiral Montagu asked, "Did you see Admiral Keppel, with the British fleet, run away from the French upon the day of action or the day afterwards?"

Captain Windsor—"No."

Previously to the examination of Captain Alexander Hood, of the Robust, Admiral Keppel addressed the President.

"Sir Thomas Pye, I know it is expected by some that, after the history the court has received of the alterations made in Captain Hood's log-book, by his order, since my trial was expected, I should

object to his evidence; but, desirous as I am that every one should give testimony who knows anything of the operations of the fleet under my command, I rather wish to hear Captain Hood's evidence."

Captain Hood then addressed the Court at some length upon the alteration made in his ship's log. He considered it incumbent upon him to revise and correct his Log-book, which he thought he was fully authorized to do. He trusted that when the whole was investigated, he should not be thought to have done anything to the prejudice of the honourable Admiral, or have acted in the smallest degree a dishonourable part.

Lieutenants Pitt and Lumley, of the Robuste, were called to produce their Log-books, and admitted that they also had made some trifling alterations in the month of October.

Keppel asked, "Where is the entry of the Robuste's Log-book respecting the 27th and 28th of July as it stood originally?"

CAPTAIN HOOD—"Upon my word I do not know."

Keppel said, "As that alteration in Captain Hood's Log-book tends to affect my life, I shall ask him no more questions."

The prosecutor here condemned what he termed Keppel's "attack on the credit and character of Captain Hood," and pledged himself to examine witnesses in the course of the trial "to resist" and "confute the cruel, the invidious attempt that had been made —" He was stopped in this course by the court, who said "the prisoner has a right to ask such questions as will save his life," and they could not sit and hear it called "a cruel and invidious attack" in the prisoner to ask such plain and straight questions as were necessary to the investigation of truth.

Admiral Keppel said, "Am I never, sir, to examine a witness without my being calumniated for so examining, and a protest entered against me?"

Admiral Montagu observed, "It is said the prisoner has attempted to take away the character of another man—he has not done so."

Admiral Keppel disclaimed having asked any indirect question of the witness. The alteration had been made and avowed; it tended to affect his life, and therefore he rejected his further evidence. With the most feeling sensibility, and the tear bursting from his eye, he addressed himself to the President, and said, "Sir, I so little expected an accusation for my having failed in any one part of my duty, on the 27th and 28th of July—it was astonishment to me. I was almost inclined to put up a paper for people to come and defend me. I did not know whom to call upon. I desired every captain to be called upon. From that moment I took all the pains I could to know who could be called upon to prove matters of truth to support my innocence, and I hope and trust my honour will come out unsullied." A periodical paper adds, "an involuntary burst of applause spoke with the truest warmth of expression, how dear the character of this brave man was to the crowd that surrounded, and how much they abhorred the vileness of the accusation."

It was determined that the speech of Sir Hugh Palliser should not appear in the minutes.

Admiral Montagu then asked, "Upon the whole transactions of the 27th and 28th of July relative to the British fleet, did it appear to you, as an old and experienced officer, that Admiral Keppel, by his conduct on either of those days, tarnished the honour of the British flag?"

CAPTAIN HOOD—"Before I can give any answer to the question, I beg to know from the President if any part of my evidence is to be taken?"

COURT—"Your evidence is taken down, and stands part of the minutes."

CAPTAIN HOOD—"I've long had the honour of knowing the Hon. Admiral, and still respect him, notwithstanding my evidence will not be further required. His character is above my praises. I've given my evidence, as far as it goes, with honour and integrity. The Court must therefore decide upon that question."

Captain John Allen, of the Egmont, was asked whether it was not more proper in the Admiral to lay to and repair his disabled ships before he attempted a second attack?

A.—"Assuredly."

Q.—"Then, Sir, upon the whole, did it appear to you, as an old experienced officer, that Admiral Keppel, by his conduct, either on the 27th or 28th of July, tarnished the honour of the British navy?"

A.—"No; and I should not take upon me to say thus much if I had not been forty years at sea, and thirty-three years an officer. I look upon it the Admiral did much honour to, instead of tarnishing, the British flag."

Captain Mark Robinson, of the Worcester, stated that the French fleet, in the morning of the 27th, were in a straggling line, and that he conceived the signal for the Worcester, and other ships to chase, was in order to bring the enemy to action, Admiral Keppel having endeavoured to the utmost to do so ever since the 23rd. That the Admiral could not possibly have brought the enemy to action had he made the signal for forming a regular line. When asked by the President "Did you

judge the action would have been brought on that day if the Admiral had waited for the fleet to have been more closely connected?" he replied, "I do not think they would, for the French were using their utmost efforts in the morning to avoid coming to action, as they had done before from the 23rd. Afterwards they edged away and bore down; undoubtedly, if the wind had not shifted, I thought they would have availed themselves of it, and not come into action at all."

He was asked whether Keppel had tarnished the honour of the British navy? He replied, "No, Sir. I have had the honour of knowing Admiral Keppel many years. I always looked upon him as an exceeding good officer, and, innately, a good man, and believe him to be so still, having no reason to think to the contrary."

The evidence of Captain Bazely, Sir Hugh Palliser's flag-captain, went to shew that "the British fleet appeared to avoid renewing the action," while the enemy, "after they began to form a line to leeward, shewed a disposition towards renewing the engagement." He further declared he "never heard the Fox hail the Formidable," and, with respect to the two ships cheering, he was certain the Fox was the *first* to cheer. He saw no reason why the engagement should not have been immediately renewed. He was asked if he knew the state of the Admiral's ships that were about him? "No; he knew the state of no other ship but that which he commanded."

Q.—"In what condition was the Formidable when she came out of action?"

A.—"All the sails that were set were cut to pieces."

When asked as to time after the action, he said "he was in too much confusion to take notice."

The Court asked a question, to which Captain Bazely begged to have his memory refreshed by referring to the answer he had given in reference to the same question when put by Sir Hugh Palliser.

To this Keppel made an objection, which was confirmed by the court.

Captain Bazely—"In all other trials of flag-officers, I beg leave to observe, whenever evidence is upon cross-examination,

he has asked the indulgence of the questions to be read, and the answers to be read also.

ADMIRAL KEPPEL—"The indulgence, I apprehend, that has been granted to others has been upon my own agreement. I do, from this moment, disagree to it. I must be obliged to cross-examine this witness very closely, and therefore I cannot agree to his evidence being read to him."

The prosecutor begged the indulgence of the Court in behalf of Captain Bazely.

PRESIDENT—"The Court will act properly."

PROSECUTOR—"It has been stated by the Admiral that he means to be particularly strict with him, and comments have been made upon his examination that have passed in the Court in a manner previous to the Court's coming to a determination.

PRESIDENT—"The Court will act properly."

PROSECUTOR—"I beg what I have observed may be inserted in your minutes."

The Court decided that, as the words uttered by the prosecutor appeared to convey a reflection upon its members, "as if they would not take the witness under their protection, it cannot be proper such words should be admitted upon the minutes of the Court, and thereby made a part of their proceedings."

PROSECUTOR—"I humbly beg the Court will do me the justice not to put that construction upon what I said."

PRESIDENT—"Sir, you must not be allowed to interrupt the business in this manner."

Captain Bazely was asked if Keppel, on the 27th of July, had been guilty of neglect in not performing the duty imposed upon him?

A.—"I do not hold myself a competent judge to judge the behaviour and conduct of an Admiral in so high a department, or an officer commanding such a squadron as the Admiral had under his command."

The same question was frequently repeated in substance, but he declined giving any other answer.

ADMIRAL RODDAM—"Captain Bazely has said the French fleet seemed, in his opinion, to intend renewing the action; what was your reason for so thinking?"

A.—"The French fleet forming a line to leeward of the British."

Q.—"When they were forming a line on the starboard tack, if they had been inclined to renew the action, could they not have fetched within pistol shot of the British fleet and engaged if they pleased?"

A.—"They could have fetched within pistol shot if they pleased."

Q.—"You say you expressed your opinion that you judged the Commander-in-chief did not intend to renew the action that afternoon with the enemy, after hauling down the signal for battle. What was your reason for so judging?"

A.—"Standing from them, carrying sail so much that we could not keep or preserve our distance."

Q.—"Did you, from the Formidable, ever make any signal that you could not follow the Admiral?"

A.—"No."

Captain Bazely's evidence.—As this witness was about to retire, Admiral Montagu said, "From the strange account Captain Bazely has given us of the two gentlemen who took minutes on board the Formidable, for the information of the Admiral and Captain, at the time of action, it has naturally led me to look at the Formidable's Log-book, to examine the day's works, and see whether there are any marks made of any signals made by the Admiral that day, or repeated, and upon opening the book, I find three leaves cut out, after the account from the 25th to the 28th. I should be glad to know if Captain Bazely can inform the Court how those three leaves came to be cut out of this book? That is the question. I see it is from the 25th to the 28th, and here is one leaf put in with a fresh tacking of thread. Three cut out and one put in, which makes it come to the day after the action; then it goes on regularly with the rest."

JUDGE ADVOCATE.—"Inform the Court how those three leaves came to be cut out of this book."

CAPTAIN BAZELY—"I do not know, so help me God. I hold a ship's Log-book sacred, and from what has been said with respect to the Robuste's, I would wish to be particular, and convince the Court and audience that I do not know, so help me God."

ADMIRAL MONTAGU—"Nobody accuses you, Captain Bazely; but it struck me, to see the Admiral's Log-book, the Log-book of the Admiral's ship, with three leaves taken out at this juncture."

CAPTAIN BAZELY—"There is a fair one, I believe; but when the Log-book was called for, I desired that to be produced, which is the ship's rough Log-book, in its original state, for it to be produced to the Court, and it was. They kick them about the orlop, which is generally the case in a man-of-war; but that is the original state, which I desired to be produced to the Court."

Sir Richard Bickerton, Bart., Captain of the Terrible, was called in support of the charge. He stated that the signal for some ships to chase, which Keppel made in the morning of the 27th, was the means of their engaging more of the enemy than they otherwise would have been able; and that had the Admiral formed a line of battle, he could not have brought on an engagement.

When Sir Hugh Palliser had finished his examination, Admiral Montagu said:

Q.—"You are an old officer, you have been in more than one action, you served under a brave man, Admiral Boscawen. The Admiral now trying is charged with negligently performing the duty imposed upon him: inform the Court if you know of any instance on the 27th of July in which he was guilty of such neglect, or did not perform the duty imposed on him?"

A.—Ever since I have had the honour of knowing and serving under Admiral Keppel, I have had the greatest esteem for him, and the highest opinion of him as an officer, and I have so still; but as I have been giving my evidence upon facts, I think my answering that question would be judging of them, which I think I have no right to do."

Q.—"Then it is supposed you do not know of any act of the

Admiral's wherein he neglected or did not perform his duty. Your opinion is not asked. You are asked from what you saw with your own eyes."

A.—"Then I do not."

Keppel now addressed the Court. "It gives me great pain to ask to retain the Court beyond the usual hour of adjournment. But the three leaves containing the narrative of the 26th, 27th, and 28th of July, being taken from the Formidable's Log-book, and supplied by others, carries with it so extraordinary an appearance that I trust the Court will not think me unreasonable in begging the Master may be immediately called in to explain it.

PROSECUTOR—"I hope I am not to be interrupted in the course of my evidence. He will be called in turn."

KEPPEL.—"In a case like this, where there is such just ground to suspect unfair and dangerous practices, I venture to hope the Court will think it necessary for the attainment of justice, that an immediate examination should be entered upon to prevent all intermediate communication."

PROSECUTOR—"I mean to call the Mate to-morrow morning; he is not attending now."*

ADMIRAL MONTAGU—I move the Master be ordered to attend here to-morrow, in case the Court should think proper to call him, and in the mean time let us debate upon the Admiral's question, and we will depend upon the Vice-Admiral's honour not to have any communication with him."

Admiral Montagu's motion was agreed to.

* The Master was then waiting in the witness's room, expecting to be called.

The following morning, Sir Hugh Palliser declared he was totally ignorant of the leaves being cut out of the Formidable's Log-book till it was observed by a member of the court; and that no person could be more astonished at it than he was; that he was anxious to have the matter fully investigated, and for that purpose had desired the Master of the Formidable, and the Mate who made the entries in the Log-book, to attend; and desired that they might be put to the severest test by being examined by the Court and Admiral without any previous questions from himself.

William Forfar, Master of the Formidable, was then sworn. "My reason," said Keppel, "for troubling the Court yesterday with a request that the Master of the Formidable might be instantly examined concerning the state of his Log-book, was to prevent any intermediate communication between him and others on this subject. I must therefore ask the Master who was the person who first told him that the Court had discovered any extraordinary appearance in the Log-book?"

A.—"I heard it in a shop yesterday. A woman in the shop telling another person that there had been some leaves tore out of the Formidable's Log-book, which was the first I heard of it."

In answer to some further questions it appeared that after the discovery he came into Court, and waited in the witness's room, expecting to be examined. When the Court broke up he went to the house where Captain Bazely resided, and was with him for about half an hour. He then went to Sir Hugh Palliser's where he met "almost all the officers that were on shore, the three Lieutenants, and none but Sir Hugh's family, and the two lawyers. That he remained in conversation with them about the Log-book for about one hour and a half. The account he gave of the missing leaves was, that one had been

cut out because some ink had been spilled upon it, the two others in consequence of an omission in the entry."

When this had been elicited by a long examination, Keppel said, " Mr. President, I shall ask no more questions concerning the matter, but I cannot help expressing my surprise that the midshipmen should only take down the signal to chase, which the prosecutor dwells on so much, omitting all the others by which they were called together again during the rest of the day; and I have only one more observation to make on the accuser's address to the Court:—his offer was intended to carry the appearance of candour, when he requested that the Master might be exposed to the strictest examination by the Court and me, without any previous questions by himself; whereas, it now turns out, just as I expected yesterday, when the Vice-Admiral resisted my application to call the Master instantly—that he has been previously examined by Sir Hugh Palliser and his friends."

Prosecutor—" Mr. President, the postponing the examination of the Master yesterday was the act and proposition of the Court before I said anything. As to my speaking to the Master since that time about cutting out the leaves, it was very natural that I should make an inquiry into a fact which I was before so totally ignorant of till yesterday, and so much surprised at. I shall continue

to give the Court the utmost information and satisfaction upon that point; and for that purpose I have sent expresses to endeavour to find the succeeding midshipman that was appointed signal midshipman to the one that was the signal midshipman at that time. He is supposed to be somewhere in a tender in Wales, or he may be on board the ship he belongs to. I have sent expresses each way to endeavour to get him; and if he has the original minute-book, that it may be produced."

The entries in the Log were then read. The Master stated that the altered log was approved by the Vice-Admiral, but that he believed that neither he (Sir Hugh) nor Captain Bazely were aware of the leaves being cut out of the Log-book.

Captain James Kinnier, late Lieutenant of the Formidable, was next examined by Sir Hugh Palliser.

He stated he was pretty clear "the Fox cheered the Formidable first," and he thought "it was after seven o'clock when the Fox spoke to the Formidable."

On his cross-examination he admitted he "took no account of time," and "could not speak to time with any certainty."

Captain Cranston Goodal, of the Defiance, was the next witness.

At the close of his evidence the Court asked, "Do you know any part of the day of the 27th or 28th of July that the English fleet ran away from the French fleet, or shewed any appearance that could be so construed?"

A.—"No."

Jacob Waller and John Hills, Lieutenants of the Formidable, both perfectly remembered that the Fox cheered the Formidable first. Their time and attention, however, was so taken

up with "knotting and splicing" that it appeared they could attend to little else.

Sir John Lockhart Ross, Captain of the Shrewsbury, was asked if he saw the British fleet run away?

A.—"Most assuredly at no period of that time had ever the British fleet the appearance of running away."

Q.—"Then, Sir, did you see the honour of the British navy tarnished on the 27th or 28th of July?"

A.—"I did not, in any respect."

Q.—"In the morning of the 28th, when you found the French fleet were gone away, did you not look upon it that they ran away from the British fleet.

A.—"Certainly."

Keppel then asked,—

"Did I use every means as an officer, to get up with and bring the French fleet to battle from the 24th to the 27th of July?"

A.—"You did, by carrying proper sail both by night and day."

Q.—"You are an officer of long experience and service, I shall therefore venture to ask, and desire you will inform the Court of any instance, if you know of any such, in which I negligently performed my duty on the 27th or 28th of July?"

A.—"I know of none, Sir. In every respect the Admiral discharged his duty, as far as I can be a judge, as became a brave and gallant officer."

Captain Joseph Peyton, of the Cumberland, was asked as to Keppel's conduct, but declined answering to matter of opinion.

The evidence of Lord Mulgrave, Captain of the Courageux, and a Lord of the Admiralty, contained nothing new.

He was asked the usual question as to Keppel's conduct on

the 27th and 28th of July, but declined answering. Several attempts being made by the Court to elicit a definite answer, he addressed them at some length, and said he was an injured man, "if he were obliged to answer the question."

The manner and language of Lord Mulgrave were such as to induce the Court to retire. Upon their return the Judge Advocate thus addressed him:—

"I am directed by the Court to observe to your Lordship that in the course of the reasons you have thought fit to use in declining to answer the question put to you by one of the members of this Court, with the approbation of the whole, you have made use of improper language; and that, too, with a warmth unbecoming of this Court to receive.* Your treatment of them is such as they cannot pass over without observing to your Lordship their sense of the impropriety, and it is their pleasure I acquaint your Lordship with their disapprobation of your Lordship's behaviour to them."

Captain Brenton, in his "Life of Lord St. Vincent," says, "In looking over this (trial) of Lord Keppel's, I could not help being struck with the inconsistency, and, I should say, great impropriety, of the Court in calling upon Lord Mulgrave to give *his opinion* on certain facts in the action in question, which he, as Captain of the Courageux, must have been a witness to. His Lordship very properly declined giving an opinion. He said that his

* Blanchard's Trial of Admiral Keppel, p. 340.

opinion might be right, or it might be wrong, and that in giving it he might, perhaps, be pronouncing censure where it was not deserved; but that, at all events, his opinion was *his own*, and he would *not* give it; he was ready to state *facts* as far as he knew them. It is difficult to regard this as other than just and honourable conduct; but the Court thought differently, and very seriously and harshly rebuked the noble lord for his pertinacity."*

Captain Brenton must have taken a very cursory glance at this trial, or he would have found that the Court did *not* call upon Lord Mulgrave to give his *opinion;* on the contrary, Admiral Montagu expressly told him that he did not, and would not, ask his opinion.† Again; it is difficult to conceive how the words of the reprimand could be so construed as to imply a rebuke for not giving an answer upon a matter of opinion.

Keppel asked no question of Lord Mulgrave.

The Prosecutor said he should call for Lord Sandwich " to exhibit and prove such letters as his Lordship had received from Admiral Keppel, in relation to the engagement of the 27th of July." " At the same time," he said, " he should not have called for them had not Admiral Keppel set him the example, by calling for his (the prosecutor's) to

* Brenton's Life of Lord St. Vincent, vol. i. p. 28.

† Minutes of Admiral Keppel's Court-martial, published by order of the Admiralty, p. 91.

Lord Sandwich; and, to save trouble, he should also ask for such of his own letters as had any relation to the engagement." Admiral Keppel "had no objection to what Sir Hugh Palliser proposed, as there was no one act of his life, whether public or private, that he did not wish to come before the Court." The Court determined that no private letters should be produced as evidence.

Lord Sandwich was not called.

At the close of the day's proceedings Keppel said, "Sir Hugh Palliser has said that I had set an example of calling for private correspondence; I have not as yet opened my defence, or called for any evidence, and, of course, can have set no example. I have not summoned the Earl of Sandwich; my reason for giving notice to his Lordship that perhaps I might call upon him to produce Sir Hugh Palliser's letters, was solely with a view to prove (what from those I had myself received, I imagined to be the case,) that the tenor of his correspondence at that time was very inconsistent with the accusation he has since thought proper to prefer against me. This point my accuser has admitted, by saying that he does not recollect that his letters contain anything to my prejudice. As to any secrets of his correspondence with the Earl of Sandwich, I neither fear nor desire them to be made public, and I acquiesce, with perfect deference, in the decision

of the Court, in respect to the production of them.

Lord Longford, Captain of the America, was next called to support the charge.

Keppel asked him, if he knew or saw of any instance in which he negligently performed any part of his duty on the 27th and 28th of July?

A.—"I can state no such instance, for I know of none."

The Masters of several ships were next examined.

Two leaves of the Ramillies'* Log-book, containing the remarks on the 26th and 27th of July, were found to have been torn out. The Master declared he knew nothing about it; that "there never was nothing upon it in the world," and supposed "the young gentlemen of the ship had done it."

Sir Hugh Palliser then called for Keppel's letter to the Admiralty, which being read, he announced that he had finished his evidence, and desired the Judge Advocate might read "a few words he had prepared by way of an address to the Court." Keppel observed, "Mr. President, the evidence upon the part of the accusation being now closed, I trust it is not presumptuous in me to declare that I do not resist the prosecutor's claim to address the Court by a speech from any imagination of danger to myself, but, as I have never known nor

* Captain Digby's ship.

heard of any such attempt in any court-martial before, and as such permission may be attended with ill consequences in others that may be governed by the precedents of this, I trust my cause, which is sufficiently new in many respects, will not be distinguished with any such innovation."

Sir Hugh Palliser replied, "Conceiving myself entitled to address the Court at the close of the evidence for the crown, I cannot consent to waive my right, but must take the opinion of the Court."

"I mean," said Keppel, "that my accuser has no right to make a speech as to the merits of the case in any part of his cause."

The Court resolved that, "it not occurring to the recollection of any of the members that it had been the usage at courts-martial to admit anything on the part of the accuser, after declaring he had gone through all the witnesses he should produce in support of the charge, it was on this occasion agreed, that the paper now offered by the accuser cannot be admitted."

The next morning, (30th January,) Keppel read his "Defence." This document, the joint production of himself, Erskine, and Jervis,* while it con-

* The writer is informed of Jervis's assistance in the defence by his medical adviser, Dr. Andrew Baird, who mentions that he, Jervis, was occupied the whole night in writing out the copy used by Keppel. It is worthy of remark that the prisoner, his friend, and his counsel, all rose by their merits to become peers of the realm.

tains a triumphant refutation of the charges preferred against Keppel, also points out, in a forcible manner, the discretionary powers of a commander-in-chief, and asserts the claims of such an officer to the support of his employers—a support which, in the case of our Admiral, was so shamefully withheld.

CHAPTER VI.

COURT-MARTIAL ON KEPPEL—THE DEFENCE—AND HONOURABLE ACQUITTAL.

The Defence—High testimony in favour of Keppel, borne by Sir Robert Harland, Admiral Campbell, Captains Faulkner, Sir John Lindsay, Hon. Frederick Maitland, Laforey, Edwards, Hon. Robert Boyle, Walsingham, Clements, Macbride, Hon. J. Leveson Gower, Jervis, Kingsmill, Sir Charles Douglass, Cosby, Nott, Hon. K. Stewart, Sir John Hamilton—Honourable acquittal—Triumphal Procession—Anecdote of a negro boy—Ball in honour of Keppel's acquittal.

1779.

On the re-assembling of the Court, Admiral Keppel read as follows:—

"Mr. President, and Gentlemen of the Court,—I am brought before you, after forty years' service, on the charge of an officer under my command, for a variety of offences which, if true or probable, would be greatly aggravated by the means I have had, from a long experience, of knowing my duty, and by the strong motives of honour which ought to have united me to perform it to the utmost extent of my power.

"Sir Hugh Palliser, an officer under my orders, conceives that I have acted very irregularly and

very culpably in the engagement with the French fleet on the 27th of July last, so very irregularly, and very faultily, that I have tarnished the lustre of the navy of England.

"Possessed with this opinion, on our return to port after the action, he has a letter from the Lords of the Admiralty put into his hands, giving me, in the most explicit terms, his Majesty's approbation for a conduct, which he now affects to think deserves the utmost disapprobation, and the severest censure; and he, with the other admirals and captains of the fleet, to whom it was likewise communicated, perfectly acquiesced in it.

"With the same ill opinion of my conduct in his bosom, he goes to sea again under my command—he goes to sea under me, without having given the least vent to his thoughts, either by way of advice to myself, or of complaint to our common superiors.

"He afterwards corresponds with me in terms of friendship; and in that correspondence he uses expressions which convey a very high opinion of my disinterestedness, and of my zeal for the service.

"After all this I come home; I am received by his Majesty with the most gracious expressions of favour and esteem, and I am received in the most flattering manner by the First Lord of the Admiralty.

"Several weeks pass, when at length, without

giving me any previous notice, the Board of Admiralty send me five articles of charge on which they declare their intention of bringing me to my trial. These charges are brought by Sir Hugh Palliser, who, nearly at the same time, publicly declared that he had taken this step from an opinion that he himself lay under an imputation of disobedience to my orders, and that this imputation was countenanced by me.

"I may say, without the least hesitation, that if I should be censured on such a charge, (which in this Court, and with my cause I think impossible,) there is an end of all command in the navy. If every subordinate officer can set up his judgment against that of his commander-in-chief; and, after several months of insidious silence, can call him to trial whenever he thinks it useful for the purpose of clearing away imputations on himself, or in order to get the start of a regular charge which, he apprehends, may possibly be brought on his own conduct, there can be no service.

"If the charges of my accuser could be justified by his apprehensions for himself, he has taken care to prove to the Court that he had very good reason for his fears; but if these charges are to be considered as supported upon any rational ground with regard to the nature of the offence, or any satisfactory evidence with regard to the facts as against me, he makes that figure which, I trust

in God, all those who attack innocence will ever make.

"In your examination into that judgment, which my officer, in order to depreciate my skill and to criminate my conduct, has thought proper to set up against mine, you have very wisely, and according to the evident necessity of the case, called for the observations and sentiments of all the officers who have served in the late engagement, so far as they have been brought before you by the prosecutor. I take it for granted you will follow the same course with those that I shall produce. If this should not be done, an accuser, according to the practice of mine, by the use of leading questions, by putting things out of their natural order, by confounding times, and by a perplexed interrogatory concerning an infinite number of manœuvres and situations, might appear to produce a state of things directly contrary to the ideas of those who saw them with their own eyes. I am astonished that, when one officer is accused by another of crimes which, if true, must be apparent to a very ordinary observation and understanding, that any witness should, on being asked, refuse to declare his free sentiments of the manner in which the matters to which he deposes have appeared to him. I never wished that any gentleman should withhold that part of his evidence from tenderness to me; what motives the accuser had for objecting to it, he knows. The

plainest and fullest speaking is best for a good cause. The manifest view and intention that things are done with, constitute their crime or merit. The intentions are inseparably connected with the acts; and a detail of military or naval operations, wholly separated from their design, will be nonsense. The charge is read to a witness, as I apprehend, that he may discern how the facts he has seen agree with the crimes he hears charged, otherwise I cannot conceive why a witness is troubled with that reading. The Court can hardly enter fully into the matter without such information, and the world, out of our profession, cannot enter into it at all. These questions, I am informed, are properly questions of fact, and I believe it. They are perfectly conformable to the practice of courts-martial. But if they were questions to mere opinion, yet the Court, not the witness, is answerable for the propriety of them. Masters have been called here by the prosecutor (and the propriety not disputed) for mere opinions concerning the effect of chasing on a lee shore. In higher matters, higher opinions ought to have weight; if they ought, there are none more capable of giving the Court information than those who are summoned here; for I believe no country was ever served by officers of more gallantry, honour, ability, and skill in their profession. You are a court of honour, as well as of strict martial law. I stand here for my fame as well as for my

life, and for my station in the navy. I hope, therefore, in a trial which is not without importance to the whole service, you will be so indulgent as to hear me with patience whilst I explain to you everything that tends to clear my reputation as a man, as a seaman, and as a commander. I will open it to you without any arts, and with the plain freedom of a man bred and formed as we all are. As I am tried for my conduct in command, it is proper I should lay before you my situation in that command, and what were my motives for the several acts and orders on account of which I stand charged. I must beg leave to make some explanation of these before I enter upon the accusations, article by article.

"To the five special articles of the charge, you may depend upon it, I shall give full, minute, and satisfactory answers, even on the narrow and mistaken principles on which some of them are made. But I beg leave to point out to you, that there is a general false supposition that runs through the whole. In censuring me for misconduct and neglect of duty, my accuser has conceived very mistaken notions of what my duty was; and on that bad foundation he has laid the whole matter of his charge.

"I think myself particularly fortunate in being able to make out my evidence, at this distance of time, with so much exactness as I shall do, the va-

rious movements which were made, or ordered, in the action of the 27th of July. It is a piece of good fortune which cannot often happen to a Commander-in-chief in the same circumstances. In an extensive naval engagement, and in the movements preparatory to it, subordinate officers, if they are attentive to their duty, are fully employed in the care of their own particular charge, and they have but little leisure for exact observation on the conduct of their Commander-in-chief. It is their business to watch his signals, and to put themselves in a condition to obey them with alacrity and effect. As they are looking towards one thing, and he is looking towards another, it is always a great chance whether they agree, when they come to form an opinion of the whole.

"You are sensible, gentlemen, that one of the things which distinguish a Commander is to know how to catch the proper moment for each order he gives. He is to have his eye upon the enemy; the rest ought to have their eyes on him. If those subordinate officers who are inclined to find fault with him do not mark the instant of time with the same precision which he does, their judgment will often be erroneous, and they will blame where perhaps there is the greatest reason for commendation.

"Besides, it must be obvious, when we consider the nature of general engagements, that in the multitude of movements that are made, and the variety of positions in which ships are successively found

with regard to one another, when in motion over a large space, (to say nothing of the smoke,) things scarcely ever appear exactly in the same manner to any two ships. This occasions the greatest perplexity and confusion in the accounts that go abroad, and sometimes produces absolute contradictions between different relators, and that, too, without any intentional fault in those who tell the story. But wherever the Commander-in-chief is placed, *that* is the centre of all the operations—*that* is the true point of view from which they must be seen by those who examine his conduct; because his opinion must be formed, and his conduct regulated, by the judgment of his eye upon the posture in which *he* sees his objects, and not from the view which another in a different and perhaps distant position has of them; and in proportion as he has judged well or ill upon that particular view, taken from that particular position, (which is the only point of direction he can give,) he deserves either praise or censure.

"On these principles I wish my manœuvres to be tried, when the proper consideration is, whether they have been unskilfully conceived, or, as the charge expresses it, in an unofficer-like manner.

"But my reasons for preferring any one step to another stand upon different grounds. All that he charges as negligence was the effect of deliberation

and choice, and this makes it necessary for me to explain, as fully as I think it right to do, the ideas I acted upon.

"I am not to be considered in the light in which Sir Hugh Palliser seems to consider me, merely as an officer with a limited commission, confined to a special military operation, to be considered upon certain military rules, with an eye towards a court-martial, for my acquittal or condemnation, as I adhered to those rules or departed from them. My commission was of a very different sort; I was entrusted with ample discretionary powers for the immediate defence of the kingdom. I was placed, in some sort, in a political as well as a military situation; and though, at my own desire, for the purposes of uniformity and secrecy, my instructions came to me through the Admiralty alone, yet part of them originated from the Secretary of State, as well as from the Board. Everything which I did as an officer, was solely subservient and subordinate to the great end of the national defence. I manœuvred, I fought, I returned to port, I put to sea, just as it seemed best to me for the purpose of my destination. I acted on these principles of large discretion, and on those principles I must be tried. If I am not, it is another sort of officer, and not one with my trust and powers, that is on trial.

"It is undoubtedly the duty of every sea-officer to do his utmost to take, sink, burn, and destroy the

enemy's ships wherever he meets them. Sir Hugh Palliser makes some charge on this head, with as little truth, reason, or justice, as on any of the others. He shall have a proper answer in its proper place—that is, when I come to the Articles. But, in justice to the principles which directed me in my command, I must beg leave to tell you, that I should think myself perfectly in the right, if I postponed, or totally omitted that destruction of ships in one, in two, or in twenty instances, if the pursuit of that object seemed to me detrimental to matters of more importance; otherwise it would be a crime for a commander, entrusted with the defence of the kingdom, to have any plan, choice, or foresight in his operations. I ought to conduct myself, and I hope I did, in each particular, by my judgment of its probable effect on the issue of the whole naval campaign, to which all my actions ought to have a relation. Without attending to that relation, some particulars of my conduct, on the 27th and 28th of July, cannot appear in the light which I imagine they are fairly entitled to, and some circumstances of my lenity towards Sir Hugh Palliser will incur a censure they do not deserve.

"I have reflected again and again on that business; and if I were to be once more in that situation, I am persuaded that I should act in all respects very much in the same manner. I have done my best and utmost, not merely to comply with an

Article of War—I should be ashamed that such a thing at such a time could have engaged my thoughts—but to defend the kingdom; and I have reason to thank God, that whatever obstructions I met with in service, or whatever slanders and accusations have followed me afterwards, the kingdom has been defended.

"My capacity may be unequal to the trust which was placed in me. It is certainly very unequal to the warm wishes I have ever felt for the service of my country; therefore, if I had intrigued, or solicited the command, or if I had bargained for any advantage on accepting it, I might be blamed for my presumption; but it came to me entirely unsought; and on accepting it, I neither complained of any former neglect, nor stipulated for any future gratification.

"It is upwards of two years ago—that is, in November, 1776, that I received a message from Lord Sandwich, brought to me by Sir Hugh Palliser, that the appearance of foreign powers in our disputes, might require a fleet at home, and that he had his Majesty's orders to know whether I would undertake the command. I said that I was ready to attend, and give my answer in person to the King. Being admitted into the closet, I gave such an one as seemed satisfactory to his Majesty; and having delivered my opinions with openness, I ended with a declaration of my willingness to serve him, in

the defence of this country and its commerce whenever I should be honoured with his commands, and as long as my health permitted.

"The appearance on the part of foreign powers not continuing (I suppose) to give so much alarm, I heard no more of the command from November, 1776 to February or March, 1778; at that time I had hints conveyed to me that I might soon be wanted. I was as ready to obey the King as I had been sixteen months before; and when required to serve, I had two or three audiences of his Majesty before I left London, finally, to hoist my flag. I must remark, that I took the freedom to express to his Majesty that I served in obedience to *his* commands; that I was unacquainted with his ministers as ministers; and that I took the command as it was, without making any difficulty, and without asking a single favour, trusting to his Majesty's good intentions, and his gracious support and protection.

"Circumstanced as I was, I could have no sinister and no ambitious views in my obedience. I risked a great deal, and I expected nothing. Many things disposed me rather to seek my ease than any new employment, and gave me a very natural reluctance to put a situation, so difficult to mend, to any new hazard.

"That hazard, gentlemen, is very great to a chief commander who is not well supported at

home. The greater the command and the larger the discretion, the more liable the commander is, in the course of service, to hasty, ignorant, envious, or mutinous objections to his conduct; and if he has not a candid and equitable acceptance of his endeavours at home, his reputation may be ruined. His successes will be depreciated, and his misfortunes, if such should befal him, will be turned into crimes. But the nation was represented to me, by those who ought best to know its condition, as not in a very secure state. Although my forty years' endeavours were not marked by the possession of any one favour from the Crown, (except that of its confidence in time of danger,) I could not think it right to decline the service of my country.

" I thought it expedient to lay before you a true state of the circumstances under which I took the command, that you may see that if I am that incapable and negligent officer which this charge represents me, I did not intrude myself into command—that I was called to it by the express orders of my sovereign; that these orders were conveyed to me by his chief minister of the marine, with great seeming concurrence and approbation; that the messenger (who also appeared to be perfectly pleased with his errand) was no other than Sir Hugh Palliser, my accuser, who ought to have been a judge of my ability from a very long acquaintance; and that, lastly, this was no matter of surprise and

hurry, since they had sixteen months' time to consider and canvass my fitness for a great discretionary trust before they placed it in my hands.

"If I gave no just cause of doubt about my real character before my appointment, I gave as little cause of uneasiness afterwards.

"From the moment of my taking the command, I laid down to myself one rule, which, in my opinion, where there are honest intentions on all sides, does more to ensure success to the service than almost any other that can be conceived, which was, '*to make the best of everything.*' The whole fleet will bear me witness that it was not my custom to complain, though it is generally thought good policy to be very exact by way of precaution. If anything was defective, I stated it in confidence and with good humour to the First Lord of the Admiralty.

"I received my supplies with acknowledgment; what could not be helped I concealed. I made no noise, nor encouraged, much less excited, any murmurings in or out of the fleet. I corresponded with the noble Earl at the head of the Admiralty; and I did everything with reference to him exactly in the same way as if my best and dearest friends were in that department. Having none but the plainest intentions, I was much more willing to take any blame upon myself than to lay it upon those who sent me out, or on those who served under me.

I was open and unguarded. In general I studied my language very little, because I little suspected that traps would be laid for me in my expressions when my actions were above reproach.

"I very soon found how necessary it was for one in my situation to be well supported by office. On my first going to Portsmouth, which was in March last, I was made to believe that I should see a strong and well appointed fleet ready for sea. An opinion of that kind was circulated very generally. There were not more than six ships of the line assembled, and in any condition to go upon service. Of them, all I shall say is, that on reviewing them with a seaman's eye, they gave me no pleasure. Whilst I continued at Portsmouth, I believe four or five more arrived. I returned to town without making any noise; I represented amicably this state of things. I was told that the ships were collecting from other ports and from sea; and I must say, that from that time forward great diligence was used,—as much, I believe, as was possible. If there had not, we never could have sailed, even with the force that we went out with.

"On the thirteenth of June, I set sail from St. Helens, with twenty ships of the line, well enough equipped—that is, neither of the best nor the worst I had seen.

"I was hardly on my station, when a new occasion occurred to shew me how much a commander,

entrusted as I was, must take upon himself, how much he must venture on his own discretion, and how necessary it is for him to have a proper support. The circumstances of my falling in with the French frigates Pallas and Licorne, and of the chase and the engagement with the Belle Poule, (so honourable to Captain Marshall,) are fresh in your memories. I undertook the affair at my own risk; war had not been declared, nor even reprisals ordered. My situation was singular; I might be disavowed, and a war with France laid to the account of my rashness.

"There was not wanting some discourse of that tendency among people whose opinions are of moment. I represented what I had done, and to this hour I have not received one syllable of direct or official approbation of my conduct.

"I found, however, that the taking of the ships was important to the state. The papers I found in them, and the intelligence I received by that means, filled me with the most serious apprehensions. I was on the enemy's coast, with twenty sail of the line; there were thirty-two in Brest Road and Brest Water, and frigates more than triple my number.

"My orders to sail with twenty ships could not have been on a supposition of having to deal with such a force. I know what can be done by English officers and English seamen, and I trust to it as much as any man. I should not be discouraged by

some superiority against me in ships, men, and metal; but I have never had the folly to despise my enemy. I saw that an engagement under such circumstances of decided superiority on the part of France would hazard the very being of this kingdom.

"If our fleet should be destroyed, it was evident that the French must become masters of the sea, for that campaign at least.

"Whether we could ever repair the loss, is not very clear to me, when I consider the state of our naval stores at that time, and the extreme difficulty of a supply as long as the French should continue superior in the Channel.

"It is impossible to say to what such a calamity might not lead. I was filled with the deepest melancholy I ever felt in my life. I found myself obliged to turn my back on France; but I took my resolution—I again risked myself on my own opinion—I quitted my station. My courage was never put to such a trial as in that retreat; *but my firm persuasion is, that the country was saved by it.*

"Those in power, who must have understood the state of the fleet and of the kingdom, were best able to discern the propriety of my conduct. But I was permitted to go out again in the same important command—very unworthy of the trust, if I had done amiss; very deserving of commendation and thanks, if at my own risk I had preserved the country from no slight danger. One or other of these was cer-

tainly the case. But the fact is, that I was continued in the command, but did not then receive, nor have I yet received, any more than I had on the former occasion of taking the French ships, one word of official approbation.

"All these discouraging circumstances did not abate the zeal I felt for the safety of my country, or disgust me with its service, or disturb my temper. On my return to Portsmouth, I made no complaint; I did everything to stifle discontent, and to get forward for sea again, without divulging the true situation of affairs, although I found myself, in publications which are considered as countenanced by authority, most grossly abused, and threatened with the fate of Admiral Byng.

"I had returned to Portsmouth on the 27th of June, and on the 9th of July, finding my fleet made up to twenty-four ships of the line of battle, with four frigates and two fire-ships, I sailed again, in obedience to my instructions, trusting to such reinforcement as I was given to expect would join me.

"At Plymouth, off the Lizard, and at sea, by several reinforcements of ships, manned as the exigency would permit, the fleet was made up to thirty sail of the line. After this, although I was much short of a proportionable number of frigates and must naturally be subject to many inconveniences from that want, I had, on the whole, no just cause for uneasiness. The greatest part of the

ships were in good condition and well appointed, and, where anything was wanting, the zeal of the commanders abundantly supplied it.

"The appearance of the French fleet confirmed the ideas upon which I had returned to Portsmouth; for on the 8th of July, the day before I left St. Helens, they sailed out of Brest thirty-two sail of the line. On the 23rd, the fleets of the two nations first came in sight of each other. I believe the French Admiral found me much stronger than he expected; and from thence he all along shewed, as I conceived, a manifest disinclination to come to an engagement. I do not say this, as meaning to call his courage in question—very far from it. I am certain he is a man of great bravery; but he might have many very reasonable motives for avoiding a decisive action. Many objects of the French, and those very important, might be obtained without a battle. On my part, I had every motive which could make me earnest to bring it on, and I was resolved to do so, whenever and by whatever means I could. I should be criminal indeed if I had not, for I had every motive for desiring to press on an action. The greatest body of the British trade was then on its way home. Two East India and two West India fleets of immense value were hourly expected. From the course it was probable they would hold, and from the situation of the French fleet, they might be taken in my sight, without a possibility of my preventing it. Besides this, I know

that two fleets, where one of them chooses to decline battle, may be for a very long time near one another without any means of bringing on an engagement. I cannot be certain whether the account I have read be quite exact, but it should appear by that account, that in King William's reign, Admiral Russell continued for two months almost in the daily view of the French fleet, without having it in his power to fight them. I do not think the thing at all impossible.

"I had, also, other reasons for the greatest anxiety to bring on an engagement, upon any terms that I could obtain it. These reasons are weighty, and they are founded in my instructions. I gave notice to the Admiralty that I might find it useful to my defence, to produce those instructions on my trial. They communicated to me his Majesty's pleasure thereupon, and informed me that they could not consent that my instructions should be laid before my counsel, or be produced at the court-martial. I was much surprised at this answer, as I conceived that those who were much better judges than I could be of what was matter of state, could never have thought of putting me in a situation which might compel me, in my defence, to produce the instructions under which I acted, when, at the same time, they meant to refuse me the fair and natural means of my justification. It is my undoubted right, if I think proper, to avail myself of them. On former trials, they have been

generally sent down with the accusation, that the conduct of the Admiral might be compared with his instructions. But, leaving the Admiralty to reflect on the propriety of their conduct, it is my part to take care of my own. I have always been willing to run any hazard for the benefit of the state. I shall not produce those instructions—I have not even shewn them to my counsel, nor communicated their contents; but my declining to make use of my own rights cannot, in a like case hereafter, affect the right of any other man. The world will judge of the wisdom and equity of ordering trials under such circumstances.

"On the 27th of July I came to an action with the French. They were beaten, and obliged to retire into their own port. No one can doubt but a commander-in-chief, who is to reap the principal share of the glory, will be earnest to have his victory as complete as possible. *Mine did not* answer to my wishes, nor to my just expectations. I was fully resolved to renew the engagement. Why it was not renewed will appear when I come to the particulars of the charge.

"As to my conduct after the engagement, I might have pursued a fruitless and most hazardous chase of some few ships, (I know not to this hour with certainty what they were, nor does my accuser,) if I had my mind filled with notions unworthy of my station. I might easily have paraded with my shattered fleet off the harbour of Brest. I chose

rather to return to Plymouth with all expedition, to put myself once more in a condition to meet the enemy, and defend the kingdom. But, on my return, I took care to leave two men of war of the line, on a cruise, to protect the trade. By the vigilance of the commanders, and the happy effect of the late advantage, the expected fleets all came in safe.

"At Plymouth I lost no time and omitted no means of putting myself in a state fit for action. I did everything to promote an unanimous exertion; and I found my endeavours well seconded by all the admirals and captains of the fleet. This benefit I acquired, by avoiding a retrospect into the conduct of the Vice-Admiral of the Blue; for, if I had instituted an inquiry or trial, it would have suspended the operations of the whole fleet, and would have suspended them in the midst of the campaign, when every moment was precious, and the exertion of every officer necessary. The delay which the present court-martial has occasioned to the service, even at this time, is evident to all the world. How much more mischievous would it have been at that period? I was sensible of it, or rather, to speak more correctly, my mind was so fully taken up with carrying on the great service which was intrusted to my care, that I could not admit the thought of misspending my own time, and wasting the flower of the British navy in attending on a court-martial.

"My letter to the Admiralty was written in the spirit which directed my conduct at Plymouth. All my letters were written in the same spirit. My letter, published in the Gazette, has been brought before this Court, for the purpose of convicting me of crimes, by the person whose faults it was intended to cover. He has attempted, very irregularly in my opinion, to call upon witnesses for their construction of my writing. No one has a right to explain my meaning, where it may be doubtful, but myself; and it is you, Gentlemen, who are to judge whether my explanation is fair.

"That letter (as far as it goes) is an account of the action, strictly true. It is, indeed, very short, and very general; but it goes as far as I intended it should. It commends Sir Hugh Palliser. It does what I meant to do. I meant to commend his bravery, or what appeared to me as such, in the engagement. As he stood high in command, to pass over one in his station would be to mark him. It would have conveyed the censure, I wished for such good reasons to avoid; and I should have defeated the one great object I had in view—the defence of the nation.

"In that letter I expressed also my hopes of bringing the French fleet to action in the morning. I had such hopes; and my accuser, even in his second edition of his Log-book, shews that I was not wholly ungrounded in my expectations; since he has recorded himself as of the same opinion. I said

that I did not interrupt the French fleet that evening in the formation of their line. I shall shew you, by evidence, if it should not have already appeared, that I was not able to do it; and that any random firing from me, under my circumstances, would have been vain against the enemy, and a disgraceful trifling with regard to myself.

"You have seen my expressions, and such is their meaning with regard both to the French and Sir Hugh Palliser, so far as they applied to the particular times to which they severally belonged. But there was *an intermediate time* with regard to both, of which, when I wrote my letter, I gave no account. I intended to conceal it. I do not conceive that a commander-in-chief is bound to disclose to all Europe, in the midst of a critical service, the real state of his fleet, or his opinion of any of his officers. He is not, under such circumstances, bound to accuse a British admiral. To me, such an accusation, under almost any circumstances, is a very serious matter. Whilst a possibility of excuse for an officer remains in my mind, I am in my disposition ready to lay hold of it; and, I confess to you, that until Sir Hugh Palliser himself had brought out to this Court all the particulars, I attributed much more to his misfortune or mistake than I now find myself authorized to do; nor did I think his conduct half so exceptionable as he himself has proved it. After the engagement he never thought fit to explain to me the reasons of his not bearing down

into my wake, to enable me to renew the action, and I did not think fit to inquire into them.

"I apprehend that a power of passing over faults or mistakes in service (into which the very best officers may be surprised) to be sometimes as necessary, if not to discipline, yet to the end of all discipline—the good of the service—as any punishment of them can possibly be; and one of the ill effects of this prosecution will be, I fear, to terrify a commander-in-chief out of one of the most valuable parts of his discretion. By using the discretion which I thought was in me, I preserved concord in the fleet, promptitude in the service, and dignity to the country. In my opinion, any complaint of such a magnitude would have produced infinite mischiefs. Nobody can imagine that in that moment an accusation of a Vice-Admiral, who was, besides, a Lord of the Admiralty, could be undertaken without a capital detriment to our naval operations, and even to the quiet of the public.

"My letter was written solely upon the principles which I have now honestly and faithfully laid before you, and which I submit to your judgment. If I have been more indulgent than was wise, the public has had the benefit, and all the trouble and inconvenience of my indiscretion has fallen upon myself. I never had a more troublesome task of the sort than in penning that letter, and it has ill answered my pains. If I have not shewn myself able at concealment, it is a fault for which I hope I

shall not lose much credit with this court-martial. I shall not be very uneasy if I have been thought to have wrote a bad letter, if I shall be found, as I trust I shall be found, to have done my duty in fighting the enemy.

"The intrusion of my letter into the trial has made it necessary for me to explain it. I now proceed with the account of my conduct.

"I got ready for sea again with my usual temper and disposition to accommodate. After this I kept the sea as long as I could. The French fleet carefully avoided my station. I could obtain no distinct intelligence of them, though I omitted no means to procure it. In consequence of this their desertion of the seas, their trade fell into the hands of our privateers, to a number and value that I believe was never equalled in the same space of time. His Majesty was pleased to speak of it in his speech from the throne, and to attribute it to the good conduct of some of his officers.

"When I considered this, when I considered the direct approbation of my conduct, and the circumstances which attended my appointment, it was with difficulty I persuaded myself that I was awake, when I found that I was treated as a criminal, and ordered without the least ceremony or previous inquiry, to be tried at a court-martial, on the accusation of my officer, my old friend, one over whose faults I had so lately cast a veil, the very person who was the messenger and congratu-

lator of my original appointment. I acknowledge it was for some time before I could sufficiently master my indignation, and compose myself to that equality of temper with which I came hither; and with which I have heard such shocking and reproachful matter and words read to my face, in the place of support I was made to look for. I feel very much inward peace at present, and the event I consider with much less concern for myself than for the service. Your judgment, I am fully persuaded, will be wise and well weighed, and such as will be of credit to yourselves and of advantage and encouragement to that part of the military which is the most interesting to this kingdom. On my part, I trust I shall entitle myself not only to an acquittal, but to an honourable reparation at your hands, for the malicious calumnies contained in the charge against me.

"Thus much I have said, as to the general matter which has arisen on the trial and the circumstances by which that trial has been brought on, as well as to the motives and principles which regulated the discretion that I conceive was in me.

"If these motives were probable and likely to be real, I cannot be guilty of the criminal negligence and want of knowledge in my profession with which I stand charged. As to the charges themselves, let the first article be read again, and I will answer it."

The Admiral then proceeded to reply to each part of the charge, after which he continued :—

" Having now offered to the Court precise answers to all the charges exhibited against me, I shall proceed to call my witnesses to support those answers, and of course to refute the charges in the order in which they have been made. I shall call them, not as a prisoner commonly calls his witnesses—to oppose them to those which appear for the prosecution. Quite the contrary. I bring them to support, confirm, enlarge, and illustrate almost, the body of evidence which has been given by my accuser.

" But before I sit down, I must discharge a duty which I feel myself to owe to the reputation of a service highly and justly favoured in this country, and which can never suffer in its honour, but the nation itself will suffer in proportion.

" I have heard it asserted and contended for during this trial, as an essential and indispensable right of a captain of a man of war to make additions and alterations in the ship's Log-book, even after the original entries had been seen, examined, and approved by himself. I have seen this attempted to be excused, nay, even justified and boasted of, in a case where the alterations and additions introduced matter of criminal and capital offence ; acknowledged by the party to have been introduced months after the original entries were

inserted; and with knowledge that a criminal charge had then been exhibited against the person in whose trial they were first heard of. I have heard this attempted to be defended where the most material of the alterations and additions were certainly not supported by fact.

"Upon this occasion, surely, I am called upon to enter my protest against a claim which subjects the Log-books of the King's ships, that ought to contain, if not always a perfect, yet always a genuine, narrative of their transactions, when the events are fresh and recent, when they cannot be mistaken, and can hardly be misrepresented, and which ought never to be altered after the entries have been made and authorized.

"This is the case of the first alteration of the Log-book. Another alteration has since appeared in another Log-book! that of the prosecutor himself! little differing from the former, except that the person that has actually made it does not appear to justify it; that the witness to it states it to have been made soon after the engagement, and that the destruction of some leaves and the substitution of others seems to be rather made for the purpose of exculpating another person than of criminating me. But whatever the intention was, the thing is equally unjustifiable in all respects; it tends equally to destroy all sort of use in these kind of records, and to render them highly fallacious, and possibly highly

dangerous. I do not dwell on all the particulars of that unhappy business!—it is painful to me, and the nature of the transaction is but too visible. There has always been, and probably will always be something slovenly in these books; and the Masters have thought they have more power over them than is proper. There is, however, a great difference between inaccuracy and malicious design; there is a difference between the correction or supply of indifferent matters, and the cancelling of pages and putting in others—omitting, adding to, and varying the most important things, for the most important purposes.

"It is also proper for me to state two or three facts to the Court, in order to place the conduct of my accuser in its proper point of view.

"I admit that the charges he has exhibited against me are very heinous. They express misconduct and negligence, they imply, (and so the Court has understood them to imply) cowardice also. If I ever committed them at all, it was in his presence, and in the presence of a numerous corps of officers, who, being called upon by the Court, have all unanimously refused, or I trust will refuse, to fix any one charge upon me. I have mentioned before the circumstance of my accuser's silence for months, during which he was called upon by the duty he owed his country to have stated my misconduct, if any such had existed; and his refusal

to do so is strong evidence of itself that, even in his opinion, my conduct was liable to no reproach.

"But this is not all. Even so late as the 5th of October last, I received a letter from him, dated at sea, conceived in terms of great goodwill and respect for me, in which, having occasion to mention some prizes which had been taken by the fleet, he considers *that* as a subject of little moment to me, assigning *this* as a reason: 'for I know you had rather meet the French fleet'—that fleet which he says I fled from!

"Is this consistent with the tenour of those charges? Could the man who wrote the one believe the other? It is absolutely impossible. I cannot produce this letter in evidence, but when I go out of the court, I will shew it to any gentleman who is desirous to see it.

"Another thing more, and I have done.

"Sir Hugh Palliser thought proper to address the public, by a printed newspaper, dated the 4th of November, principally, as it seems, for the sake of asserting that he was not, and insinuating that I *was*, the cause of the French not being re-attacked in the afternoon of the 27th of July.

"In that paper he positively denies that he received any message by Captain Windsor, saying a word about renewing the attack; and he calls the contrary assertion a false one. Captain Windsor has been called, and he has proved that at five o'clock

he received from me, and at about half-past five he delivered to Sir Hugh Palliser *himself*, the message to come with the ships of his division into my wake, and that I only waited for him to renew the attack.

"This account of Captain Windsor has been attempted to be discredited by the prosecutor, who has asked Captain Bazely, and I believe one or two more, whether it was not a later hour than Captain Windsor named; I shall, for that reason, call witnesses to confirm Captain Windsor in all the circumstances of his testimony.

"I owe it to him, as an honourable man, to shew that his evidence is correctly true.

"I will prove that the message sent by me was perfectly delivered by him at the time he speaks to, and that it was exactly repeated by him to the Vice-Admiral. Yet, after his own ears had heard, at half-past five in the afternoon of a summer's day, that I waited only for him and his division to renew the attack, this gentleman applies to me—ignorant, negligent, cowardly, as he now represents me—to certify his good behaviour, and to support his character against the malice of his enemies. He applies to me to sign a paper, containing many particulars directly contrary to the evidence you have heard upon oath, and which I will also shew to any one.

"At present, I have only to do with one of those particulars. That paper (concurring with his at-

tempts in this trial) contains this assertion—that the calling his and Vice-Admiral Sir Robert Harland's divisions into my wake in the evening was not for the purpose of renewing the battle at that time, but to be in readiness for it in the morning. This my accuser had the confidence to tender me to sign—to sign an assertion of a fact, absolutely unfounded, the contrary of which I knew to be true, and the contrary of which Captain Windsor has proved my accuser knew to be true! How that gentleman felt when this came out, I know not; but if I could conceive myself in the same situation, I know that it would be difficult to express what I should *feel. I cannot wish so heavy a punishment to my worst enemy.*"

The first witness called for the defence was Sir Robert Harland, to whom Keppel put the following questions:—

"Was it in my power, as an officer, to have prevented the French forming their line on the starboard tack?"

A. "It was no more in your power to have done that, than it was to have collected your ships to have done it with."

Q. "What would have been the probable consequence of orders to you at that time to attack them?"

A. "I should have obeyed, and the French would

have deserved to be hanged if they had not taken me and the ships of my division."

Q. "Had the British fleet, standing to the southward, upon the same tack the French fleet were upon, and both forming their line, under the sail carried by the Victory, the appearance of a flight?"

A. "O fie! fie! No!"

Q. "Did I lose any favourable opportunity of re-attacking the French fleet in the afternoon, while there was day enough to have done it properly?"

A. "If I have not said it before, I say it now;—you never had the means of doing it."

Admiral Campbell, when called, without hesitation charged Sir Hugh Palliser with direct disobedience; and when asked by Sir Hugh Palliser, in his cross-examination, whether he was not very precipitate in charging him in court with direct disobedience to signals, he replied—"No, I do not think so;" and repeated his charge, and said, he "never meant to reproach any one with disobeying a signal he had never seen." "Is it possible," said Sir Hugh, "to see such a signal on board a ship directly end on?" To which Admiral Campbell replied—"When there are two ships with the same signal flying, and one considerably to windward of the other, I think no ship can be so situated as not to be able to see it on board one or the other of them."

With respect to the message sent to Sir Hugh Palliser, Admiral Campbell said, he added a little to the message, for he hailed Captain Windsor, and told him to say that they had long waited for the Vice-Admiral. He also proved, that during the whole afternoon, after the action, Keppel never for one moment gave up the design of re-attacking the enemy, and frequently expressed to him (the witness) his uneasiness and surprise at Sir Hugh Palliser's continuing to windward, without making any effort to obey the signal, and that he, in return, expressed his apprehension of Sir Hugh Palliser's being wounded, as, he

said, "I was sure I thought the Formidable could not behave so, if he was in health."

Sir Hugh Palliser asked whether it was known on board the Victory, before twelve o'clock at night, that the enemy had fled?

Admiral Campbell.—"No; it was not known till daylight, and was then a matter of surprise to everybody."

Sir Hugh.—"Were any frigates stationed between the two fleets that night to give notice of their motions to the Admiral, as had been done on former nights?"

Admiral Campbell.—"No; nor do I know any good purpose it would have answered; for had the Admiral known of the French fleet bearing away at the time they did, I do not know of any step he would have taken to have prevented it. His signals had been so ill obeyed by the Vice-Admiral of the Blue during the day, that I think he durst not make any chasing signal in the night to have pursued the enemy, at the risk of finding a great part of his fleet lying to windward of him in the morning."

When asked by Keppel, whether he knew or saw of any instance in which he negligently performed any part of his duty on the 27th and 28th of July? he replied—"I never saw any negligence then, or at any other time when I served under the Admiral. I never served under any officer who was more diligent in the execution of every part of his duty, as far as came within my observation."

Admiral Campbell is represented as having spoken low, and being much affected throughout his examination. "Never was there an exhibition," writes an eye-witness, "of any scene more truly affecting, more noble, or more manly, than the examination of the good old Admiral Campbell. United to one

another by the strictest ties of the dearest friendship, the noble prisoner and he formed a picture the most sympathetic and expressive. Labouring with that variety of passions which the occasion of their meeting at that bar naturally created, they became too powerful for restraint. While the Rear-Admiral answered to his friend's question, respecting his having negligently performed his duty, he wiped away the tears from his cheek, and could hardly articulate his words."*

Captain Jonathan Faulkner, of the Victory, corroborated Admiral Campbell's evidence.

He further stated that he was sent with the Admiral's despatches, and the following message, which he repeated twice to the Earl of Sandwich:—"Give my compliments to Lord Sandwich, and tell him I have more to say to him than I think proper to put in my public letter; and if it is his Lordship's pleasure to ask me any questions, I am ready to wait upon him."

His answer as to whether Keppel negligently performed his duty was, "I cannot state to the Court any instance wherein the Admiral did not conduct himself like a great and able sea officer."

Captain George Stoney, Lieut. Robert Calder,† the Hon.

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* "He (Admiral Campbell) was undoubtedly," says a friend, "a great naval character, being a man of undaunted courage, almost unrivalled as a seaman, and among seamen, perhaps wholly so, as an astronomer and navigator. His integrity was unimpeachable, and therefore, if he overstepped his usual moderation in Admiral Keppel's business, it must be attributed to his conviction of the justice of the cause and the warmth of his friendship for an old and early messmate."

† Afterwards Sir Robert Calder. He served under Keppel at the reduction of Goree, in 1759, on which occasion he was severely wounded.—Rolfe's Naval Chronology, vol. i. p. 164.

Captain George Berkeley, and Sir Jacob Wheate, all of whom served as lieutenants on board the Victory, confirmed what the other witnesses had before stated.

Sir John Lindsay, K.B., Captain of the Prince George, gave his evidence in a straightforward and distinct manner. He said, "If the enemy had been pursued the next morning, it would have been without the least probability of coming up with them, and also have been attended with great danger to the fleet in the state they were then in."

Keppel desired he would state to the Court any instance, if he saw or knew of any such, in which he had negligently performed any part of his duty on the 27th and 28th of July.

Sir John Lindsay replied, "I can state no such instance, because the Admiral fulfilled his duty in every particular. I had the honour of serving under his command last war, and had such strong proof of his bravery, ability, and knowledge in his profession, as pointed him out to me as one of the greatest sea officers this country ever produced; and the whole of his conduct during his late command has further convinced me that my former opinion was just."

Keppel requested that the letter signed "Hugh Palliser," in the "Morning Post," and which the prosecutor had admitted to be his, might be read. Sir Hugh Palliser objected, and gave Keppel to understand he would give him satisfaction, should he require it, in any other place. Keppel replied, with indignation, "Mr. President, I do assure that gentleman, before this Court, that I will never call upon him as a private man—never." Sir Hugh repeated his objection, and desired what he had said

might be taken down in the minutes of the trial. "Taken down in the minutes!" exclaimed Admiral Roddam,* with warmth,—"No, Sir, it should not have been *heard* here, much less remembered!" Keppel observed, "He called for my letter to the Admiralty, and in his letter where he accused me, he has written to all the ladies and gentlemen now hearing me, and told his story, which probably could never have been so well answered if I had not been brought before you gentlemen, and now he refuses that to be read."

The Hon. Frederick Maitland, Captain of the Elizabeth, said, he thought the Admiral "did everything that a gallant and experienced officer could do upon the occasion."

Captain John Laforey, of the Ocean, felt "convinced, at that time, as far as his judgment extended, that Admiral Keppel had left no means uneffected to bring the French to action, or to continue it afterwards, and had remained in these sentiments invariably to this time."

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* Admiral Roddam, a descendant from a very ancient family, entered the navy at an early age, and soon acquired the character of a brave and skilful officer. In 1757, while in command of the Greenwich, of 50 guns, he fell in with a French squadron, consisting of five sail of the line, two frigates, and an armed store-ship. Captain Roddam gallantly fought, for twelve hours, against this overwhelming force, in the hope of taking and (being a fast sailer) of escaping with his prize, the L'Eveille, of 64 guns. The Greenwich, however, becoming unmanageable, Captain Roddam ordered the colours to be struck. The Captain of the L'Eveille desired him to hoist his boat out and come on board. Roddam replied he would do no such thing, but that he must be sent for, or he would hoist his colours and defend his ship to the last. He was a man of much kindness of disposition, and of great simplicity of manners. He died in 1808, and was succeeded in his estates by William Spencer Stanhope, Esq., (brother of John Spencer Stanhope, Esq., of Cannon Hall, Yorkshire,) who assumed the surname of Roddam, and is the present Mr. Roddam, of Roddam.

Captain Richard Edwards, of the Sandwich, knew of no instance of Keppel's having negligently performed his duty.

The Hon. Robert Boyle Walsingham, Captain of the Thunderer, considered the only reason why the French fleet was not re-attacked while it was daylight, was in consequence of Sir Hugh Palliser not supporting the Admiral.

When asked whether the manœuvres of the British fleet, after the action, had the appearance of a flight, he answered, "Of a flight! No, Sir; I hear the question with indignation and I reprobate the idea."

In reply, as to Keppel's conduct on the 27th of July, he replied, "Sir, I know of none. I have always been taught to look up to you as an officer of great ability, courage, and good conduct. I never had the honour of serving under your command before, but, prepossessed as I was in your favour, your conduct exceeded my most sanguine expectations."

Captain Michael Clements, of the Vengeance, said, "I have long had the honour of knowing Admiral Keppel. I have ever had the highest esteem for him, both as a man of honour, the best of officers, and a gallant man. I do not conceive it was possible for more to be done by the Admiral than was done during the time the French fleet were in sight.

Captain John Macbride, of the Bienfaisant, considered the standing to the southward "the well-timed manœuvre of a judicious officer," and thought "Admiral Keppel realized on those days, the 27th and 28th of July, every favourable opinion that his country ever formed of him."

The Hon. John Leveson Gower, Captain of the Valiant, was of opinion that the Admiral's "whole conduct was spirited, able, and great."

Captain John Jervis, of the Foudroyant, was then called. His evidence was given in a straightforward, manly manner, and substantiated every fact advanced by Keppel in his speech on opening his defence.

Admiral Keppel questioned him *seriatim* upon every charge made against him. When asked, by

Keppel, to acquaint the court if he saw or knew of any instance in which he had negligently performed his duty on the 27th and 28th of July, Captain Jervis, from an obvious point of delicacy, replied, "With great respect to you, sir, and great deference to the court, I hope I shall be indulged by having that question put by the court."

The question was accordingly altered, and put by the court; upon which Captain Jervis gave the following answer:—

"I feel myself bound by the oath I have taken to answer that question. I believe it to be consonant to the general practice of sea courts-martial. I cannot boast a long acquaintance with Admiral Keppel; I never had the honour of serving under him before; but I am happy in this opportunity to declare to this court, and to the whole world, that during the whole time the English fleet was in sight of the French fleet, he displayed the greatest naval skill and ability, and the boldest enterprise, on the 27th of July, which, with the promptitude of Vice-Admiral Sir Robert Harland, will be the subject of my admiration and of my imitation as long as I live."*

Captain Robert Kingsmill, of the Vigilant, declared he neither could state, nor did he know of any instance of Admiral Keppel's having negligently performed his duty, but that he discharged it with the ability of a great and gallant officer.

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* In the cross-examination of Captain Jervis, Sir Hugh Palliser having put many questions, grounded upon false assumptions, the following squib soon after made its appearance in the newspapers:—

"*Q.* Supposing the van of the fleet were the rear,
And the ships furthest off had been the most near;
And supposing the fleet had tacked or had wore,
When their rigging was shot, and their sails were all tore;
And if ships three miles off had been distant a cable,
Might the fight been renewed?—*A.* No, the ships were not able."

Sir Charles Douglas, Bart., Captain of the Stirling Castle, gave his evidence in a quaint style, and proved that Sir Hugh Palliser was not in his station until near daylight on the morning of the 28th. He likewise stated, that he "did not observe anything done or left undone by Admiral Keppel on the 27th or 28th of July, bearing the appearance of his negligently performing his duty."

Captain Philip Cosby, of the Centaur, when desired by Keppel to state to the court if he knew of any instance in which he had negligently performed any part of his duty on the 27th or 28th of July, replied—

"Mr. President,—If I am allowed, from the experience of thirty years' service, to assume an opinion of the conduct of any commander-in-chief, and more especially upon so great an officer as Admiral Keppel, I am of opinion, and do firmly believe, that he did do his utmost, in every respect, for the good of his Majesty's service. It is the first time I have had the honour of being under his command, and it has been one of the most unfortunate events in my service that I had not been before."

Captain John Nott, of the Exeter, gave the following answer to the same question:—"I know of none; I have had the honour of serving under you before, and it was the greatest pride of my heart when I was commissioned to serve under you again, knowing you to be a gallant seaman, and I thought you the first Admiral in the world. Your conduct during the whole time we saw the French fleet convinced me that my judgment was right in respect to your abilities."

On the same question being put to the Hon. Keith Stewart, Captain of the Berwick, and Sir John Hamilton, Bart., Captain of the Hector, both replied, "I know of none."

After Captain Stuart had been examined, the Hon. Thomas Lumley, a lieutenant of the Robuste, was called and examined relative to the alteration in the Robuste's Log-book. He produced his own

Log-book, which was copied from that of the ship's, previous to any alteration having been made.

The Log-books were then compared, and the variations appeared as under:

ALTERED LOG.	MR. LUMLEY'S COPY OF THE ORIGINAL LOG.
A signal for us, and several other ships of the Vice-Admiral of the Blue's squadron to give chase to windward.	A signal for the Vice-Admiral of the Blue's squadron to give chase to windward.
Body of the French fleet S. half W. At half-past ten the headmost ships were engaged.	Body of the French fleet S. by W. five or six miles.
Between six and seven o'clock, perceived on board the Admiral ours and several other ships' signals to bear down into the line, which was repeated by the Formidable. In the evening, having stopped the shot-holes, took our station in the line, and continued in it the whole night, with as much exactness as a disabled ship could do, with the Admiral making much sail.	At six, tacked, bore down, and resumed our station in the line.
At daylight, saw three sail of the enemy very near us. The Admiral made the signal to chase to the S.E.	

Arnold, the Master of the Robuste, having been examined, Keppel thus addressed the Court:—

"Mr. President,—My accuser, when he closed his evidence, was pleased to lay in a claim that Captain Hood should be allowed to be heard in his justification if I attacked his Log-book. I believe, if the Court will refer to the minutes of the seventh day's proceedings, his justification, such as he thought proper to make, will be found already recorded; and I only desire that the evidence I have just produced may be applied to it. I shall mention nothing but what Captain Hood admitted. He there says, he corrected and revised his Log-book in his own protection, not knowing but that he should appear at your bar as a prisoner instead of a witness. But I appeal to the sense of the Court, whether the alterations and additions be such as can support the belief, or even the possibility of the existence of such a motive; since not one of those I am going to mention have the most distant reference or relation to any fact which could involve him in guilt, though they are all of them direct articles of my accuser's charges against me. How, Sir, for instance, could the insertion or omission of the signal, on the morning of the 27th, for several ships of the Vice-Admiral of the Blue's division to chase to windward, instead of the whole of the Blue Squadron, on which my accuser founds his

first charge, possibly affect the character or conduct of Captain Hood? How much less could the three French ships being seen, or not seen, very near us on the morning of the 28th?

"He surely never could be answerable for their escape! But these additions, although I must ever think of them with pain, when I reflect on the reference they have to my accusation, the time I have just proved them to have been made, and the intimacy of the person who made them with my accuser, yet, as they are certainly facts, (containing, I trust, no guilt, but in the opinion, or rather in the wishes of my accuser,) and, as the Log-book is not made a false record by these insertions, I lay no other stress upon them than to shew that they could not be made for the purposes which Captain Hood has stated to the Court.

"But the one that remains behind is of a very different complexion indeed!—It is the addition of a circumstance which constitutes a capital charge against me, and which, if it missed my life, could not fail to destroy what is much dearer than life to every man who deserves to live.

"Sir, it is besides the addition of a circumstance which, though Captain Hood has called it a fair and faithful representation, has been proved by a cloud of witnesses to be wholly unfounded in fact.

"And, what is worse than all, has been this moment proved, by the position of the Robuste on

the morning of the 28th, to be a circumstance in which Captain Hood could have no possible personal interest.

"Had the Robuste fallen astern in the night, the addition, though not the less criminal, would at least have been reconcilable with his account of its being done in his own protection. But when, instead of her being struggling to keep her station as a disabled ship, from the Victory's making much sail, she has been proved to have run miles a-head of it during a short night. I am entitled to say such motives could not have produced the addition. I am sure I wish he could have formed one to protect it. I declare to you, Sir, it is a subject of sorrow to me that an indisputably brave and useful officer, which I know and acknowledge him to be, and which, on that day, he proved himself to be—a man with whom I had lived in familiar friendship, should have been led by the design of *others* into such a snare; and I can assure the Court and the public, I have only searched to the bottom of it for the safety of the service.

"I lament the alarms which Captain Hood stated in his justification. No man alive can, or ought to feel more sensibly than I do for innocence, under the apprehension of groundless impeachment. But I am not answerable for them; their authors were unknown to me; I neither promoted nor approved of them; if I have ever myself mentioned the Blue

division, it was as a body, under the control and direction of their own Vice-Admiral, and not as individuals.

"I honour them all as brave men; and it was with astonishment that, no longer ago than Saturday, I heard a question put by my accuser, pointed directly to their crimination, and can assure the Court, that I was well pleased to see it so honourably and spiritedly repelled by the witness to whom it was addressed."*

The prosecutor requested permission to call evidence to support the credit of Captain Hood.

Court.—"That is impossible."

Prosecutor.—"I apprehend it may affect his credit as a witness, therefore beg you will allow witnesses to be called for the purpose of having that matter more clearly elucidated."

Court.—"You have closed your evidence."

Prosecutor.—"I am informed of an instance, in a good many respects similar, where the credit of a

* This witness was Captain Jervis. The prosecutor asked him the question—"Was not the signal, which was flying on board the Commander-in-chief, a sufficient warrant for every ship to take their stations when they were able to do so?" Jervis declined answering. Among his papers referring to the court-martial is one, in his own handwriting, which contains the following remark:—"The infernal question, wherein an attempt was made to draw me into a censure of the Captains of the Vice-Admiral of the Blue's division, is very materially altered from the manner he put it, and much of the wickedness is thereby done away."—Lord St. Vincent's MSS.

witness was arraigned, in the trial of Lord George Sackville, where an indulgence was permitted for evidences to be called to obviate reflections that had been thrown upon one of the witnesses."

President.—"It has not appeared in anything that the Admiral has said, that it has affected Captain Hood's evidence at all."

Prosecutor.—"If it is supposed that he has inserted a falsehood, I apprehend it may affect his credit."

Prisoner.—"The Court are the best judges of that which appears on the minutes."

After some further conversation, Admiral Montagu observed, "It is not a matter we can take cognizance of at all; if he has done wrong, I am sorry for it."

Captain Isaac Prescott, of the Queen, was the last officer examined. In giving his testimony as to his Admiral's conduct, he thus addressed him:—"Receiving an early part of my naval education under your care, I have ever looked up to you with a degree of filial respect. Your character stands too high to stoop to my judgment; but thus called upon, I declare, and am happy to make the declaration upon my oath, that your conduct on those days added lustre to your name, and held you up a great and worthy example to every officer of the British navy."

After some of Keppel's letters to the Admiralty had been read, he announced that he had closed his

evidence, and said he should make no observation upon it, but submit the whole to the wisdom and the justice of the Court.

Sir Hugh Palliser then addressed the Court.

"MR. PRESIDENT,—There being no other witnesses to examine, it is my intention to address the Court with some observations, as well upon the evidence as the Admiral's defence; for which purpose I beg to be indulged by the Court with a short time finally to prepare myself. If the trial had not run into so extraordinary a length, I should not wish for longer time than till to-morrow; but with such a mass of evidence to be observed upon, I hope the Court will not think it unreasonable to indulge me till Wednesday, more especially as the Admiral has thought fit, in some measure, to defend himself by criminating me."

Keppel replied, "I am entirely in the judgment of the Court with respect to my accuser's right to reply. I believe it is unprecedented in naval courts-martial; even in the case of Admiral Byng—where I was (unluckily for myself, at least I reckon it unlucky where such a sentence was passed,) a member of that court-martial, the prosecution was carried on in the name of the Crown, by the Secretary of State—no such attempt was made, and I am at a loss to conceive upon what ground Sir Hugh Palliser founds such an unprecedented claim."

The Court withdrew to deliberate. On their re-

turn, the Judge Advocate read the following resolution :—

"The Court having declared, in a former resolution taken in the course of this trial, when the prosecutor said he had gone through all the witnesses he should produce in support of the charge, that the paper then offered by the prosecutor could not be admitted, and the Court continuing of the same opinion, agreed, that now it is declared, The whole evidence, not only on the part of the charge, but of the defence, has been closed, nothing further by way of address from either party can be received."

The Court then adjourned.

The verdict seems to have been anticipated by the public. Gibbon, the historian, at that time a Lord of Trade in expectancy, writes to Mr. Holroyd, on the 6th of February, five days before the sentence was declared :—"Portsmouth is no longer an object of speculation. The whole stream of all men and all parties runs one way. Sir Hugh is disgraced, ruined, &c. &c., and as an old wound has broken out again, they say he must have his leg cut off as soon as he has time. In a night or two we shall be in a blaze of illumination, from the zeal of naval heroes, land patriots, and tallow-chandlers: the last are not the least sincere."

The wound alluded to by Gibbon was not in Sir

Hugh Palliser's leg, though it occasioned lameness. Governor Johnstone, his panegyrist, once turned the infirmity to account. Sir Hugh was walking to his seat in the House while the Governor was making an attack upon Keppel. "See him (Palliser)," said Johnstone, "hobbling up the House, crippled and lame, in fighting for his country." That it was not in fighting that Sir Hugh met with the accident, is shewn by a private letter from him to Lord Anson, dated Antigua, May 23rd, 1748:—

"I took the liberty some time ago of informing your Lordship of my moving into the Sutherland, since which, in February last, by the accident of the arm-chest catching fire, I had the misfortune of being wounded by a shot in my right shoulder, and another passing directly through my body, which has taken away the use of my legs, and left me at present incapable of serving.

"I am, Sir, &c.

"HUGH PALLISER."*

The explosion, therefore, on the 27th of July, was the second that had occurred in ships commanded by Sir Hugh Palliser.

On the 11th of February, Lord George Germain writes from London to Lord Buckinghamshire:—"Keppel's trial is at an end; the sentence is not

* Mr. Upcott's MSS.

yet known, but illuminations are preparing upon the expected acquittal, and then Sir Hugh Palliser must defend his own conduct, for he stands accused of direct disobedience to orders.*

During the whole course of the trial, Keppel's constant and early friend, the Duke of Richmond, never quitted him. There were others also who were constantly at his side, amongst whom may be named the Marquess of Rockingham, Burke, the Duke of Portland, the Earl of Effingham, and the Duke of Cumberland. The greatest respect was shewn to him by the populace. Whenever he went to, or retired from, the Court, which were the only times he appeared in public, he was loudly cheered and applauded, not only by the sailors and populace, but by persons of all ranks; while Sir Hugh Palliser never shewed himself without being hissed, and ballads were daily sang in the streets against him. Many of these are now before the writer.

On the 11th of February, the members of the court-martial assembled to pronounce their sentence. The Court was crowded to excess, and an immense concourse of people had filled every street and avenue leading to the Governor's house, where the trial had been held. The doors were opened at eleven o'clock, when the Judge-Advocate read the following resolution:—

"At a Court-martial assembled on board his

* Sir Robert Heron's MSS.

Majesty's ship the Britannia, in Portsmouth Harbour, on the 7th of January, 1789, and held, by adjournment, at the house of the Governor of his Majesty's garrison, at Portsmouth, to the 11th of February inclusive, pursuant to an order from the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, dated the 31st of December 1778, directed to Sir Thomas Pye, &c., and pursuant to the said order, proceeded to inquire into a charge brought by Vice-Admiral Sir Hugh Palliser against the Hon. Augustus Keppel, Admiral of the Blue, for misconduct and neglect of duty on the 27th and 28th of July, and to try him for the same; and on the seventh day of the trial, Admiral Buckle, one of the members of the said Court, falling ill, the rest of the members resolved to proceed without the said Admiral Buckle; and having heard the evidence in support of the said charge, and the prisoner's defence, and maturely and seriously considered the whole, are of opinion that the charge is malicious and ill-founded; it having appeared that the said Admiral, so far from having by misconduct and neglect of duty on the days alluded to, lost an opportunity of rendering an essential service to the state, and thereby tarnishing the honour of the British navy, behaved himself as became a judicious, brave, and experienced officer.

"The Court do therefore unanimously and honourably acquit the said Admiral Augustus Keppel

of the several articles contained in the charge exhibited against him, and he is hereby fully and honourably acquitted accordingly."

Sir Thomas Pye then addressed himself to Admiral Keppel, in the following words, delivering to him his sword at the same time :—

"Admiral Keppel,—It is no small pleasure to me to receive the commands of the Court I have the honour to preside at, that in delivering to you your sword, I am to congratulate you on its being restored to you with so much honour, hoping, ere long, you will be called forth by your sovereign, to draw it once more in the defence of your country."

No sooner were these words pronounced than an acclamation of joy burst forth in repeated peals "from the Duke of Cumberland to the meanest mechanic." The enthusiasm rapidly communicated itself to the assembled crowd, and soon became general throughout the town. A signal gun was fired to dispatch the tidings to Spithead, and the ships immediately saluted and cheered. The East India ships lying at the Motherbank fired nineteen volleys.

On the Court breaking up, Keppel came forward and again received the congratulations of his friends. At the solicitation of those around him, he agreed to walk home. A procession was formed, which, preceded by a band of music, playing "See the

conquering hero comes," left the Court-house in the following order:—

A band of Music.

Admiral Sir Robert Harland. } THE ADMIRAL. { His Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland.

General Keppel, Admiral Campbell, Sir Edward Hughes.
Lord Effingham, Marquess of Rockingham.
Duke of Richmond, and other noblemen.
Sixty Captains.
Lieutenants and Masters.
Private Gentlemen,
&c. &c. &c.

The whole procession had light blue ribbons in their hats, which they carried in their hands, with the word "KEPPEL" inserted in gold letters. These favours had been made up and presented to them for the occasion by the Duchess of Cumberland, the Duchess of Richmond, the Marchioness of Rockingham, the Countess of Effingham, and other ladies. While the band played, the whole concourse of noblemen and gentlemen in the procession, and ladies from the windows, supplied the vocal part, and the crowd closed each period with a choral cheer.

As soon as he had got into his house in High-street, he came to the window with the Duke of Cumberland and Sir Robert Harland, bowed to the people in the street, and then received the congratulations of the noblemen and gentlemen on his

honourable acquittal; the band at the same time playing " Rule Britannia."

Among the general acclamations of joy on the Admiral's acquittal, an instance is recorded of a poor negro who had been liberated from slavery on the reduction of Goree, and had followed Keppel to England. In order to obtain a view of his deliverer, he placed himself at a window, close to which the procession had to pass. No sooner did he see Keppel, than he burst forth into the most extravagant rapture, exclaiming " God A'mighty knows my heart,—I do love a dear Admiral! God bless the Admiral!" These expressions, simple and artless as they were, attracted the attention, says the narrator, " of the whole procession, and coming from one so disinterested were the greatest eulogy virtue could receive."

Another account of the rejoicings states—" It is impossible to paint the joy that possessed every feature. Holiday was expressed in every look, and the hearts of the people were in their eyes. The Admiral alone seemed pensive, and had many conflicting passions labouring in his countenance,—his acquittal not satisfying him that other honourable men might not be liable to the same danger, and feeling for the insecurity of the British flag while such attempts were countenanced upon the honour of the naval profession."

The bells continued ringing the whole day, and the evening concluded with bonfires, illuminations, fireworks, and other demonstrations of public rejoicing.

A magnificent entertainment was prepared by the Captains of the fleet, to which the Admiral and his friends were invited. Among the toasts which were given after dinner were the following:—"May the brave Admiral Keppel be ere long called upon to draw that sword again in defence of his country which was this day so honourably returned to him!" "May every malicious prosecution be tried by a court as independent as that of Admiral Keppel's!" "May the honour of the British navy never again be tarnished by so malicious a charge!"

The next day the Duke of Cumberland gave a dinner to Admirals Keppel, Montagu, Roddam, Arbuthnot, Campbell, and Hughes, with the Captains of the fleet, the Marquess of Rockingham, Burke, Fox, Colonel Luttrell, and a large body of the nobility and gentry. In the evening, a grand ball was given at the Assembly-rooms by the Admirals and Captains of the fleet, which was attended by the Duke and Duchess of Cumberland, the Marquess and Marchioness of Rockingham, the Earl and Countess of Effingham, and upwards of five hundred other ladies and gentlemen, the former of whom all wore blue ribbons. The ball was opened with a minuet

by the Duke of Cumberland and Lady Rockingham, and the country dances were commenced by Admiral Roddam and the Countess of Effingham.

The town this night also was splendidly illuminated.

On Monday, the 15th, Keppel went on board the Victory, and hoisted his flag amidst the cheers and salutes of all the ships assembled at Spithead and Portsmouth.

CHAPTER VII.

PUBLIC REJOICINGS AT KEPPEL'S ACQUITTAL

Letters—Earl of Abingdon to the Marquess of Rockingham—Sir Joshua Reynolds to Admiral Keppel—Riots in consequence of Keppel's court-martial—Rejoicings at his acquittal—Parliamentary proceedings—Keppel receives the thanks of both Houses of Parliament—Addresses to him from various parts of the kingdom—The freedom of London and several other corporate towns voted to him—He dines with the Common Council—His correspondence with Dunning, Lee, and Erskine—His letter to George the Third—His correspondence with the Admiralty—Strikes his flag.

1779.

THE two following letters were written immediately after the sentence of the Court became known in London :—

THE EARL OF ABINGDON TO THE MARQUESS OF ROCKINGHAM.

"Hill-street, Feb. 12th.

"MY DEAR LORD,—Permit me to thank you most kindly for your very interesting intelligence, which I received with the most heartfelt satisfaction and pleasure. It is a glorious victory—more glorious to Mr. Keppel than the defeat of the French fleet would have been, and more glorious to this country, because from the former the worst of con-

sequences might have followed, and from this, it is to be hoped, some solid national advantage may be drawn. It has a broad bottom to stand upon, and your Lordship will, no doubt, avail yourself of it. What support I can give will be to the uttermost of my power. So black a conspiracy the annals of this country never knew before. To conspire against the life of a man upon the supposition of his being in error is nothing new, but to conspire against the life of a man because he had done what was known to be right, was reserved for the history of the present reign.

"As soon as I hear of Mr. Keppel's coming to town, I will call upon him with my personal congratulations.

"Lady Abingdon has added a son and heir to my domestic cares. I hope the times of his life will be better than those of his father.

"I am, my dear Lord, with the greatest truth and respect,

"Your Lordship's most faithful
and obliged humble servant,
"ABINGDON."

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS TO ADMIRAL KEPPEL.

"London, February 12th, 1779.

"SIR,—Amidst the rejoicing of your friends, I cannot resist offering my congratulations for the complete victory you have gained over your enemies.

We talk of nothing but your heroic conduct in voluntarily submitting to suspicions against yourself, in order to screen Sir Hugh Palliser and preserve unanimity in the navy, and the kindness of Sir Hugh in publishing to the world what would otherwise have never been known.

"Lord North said of himself, that he was kicked up stairs; I will not use so harsh an expression, but it is the universal opinion that your Court-martial is unique of its kind. It would have been thought sufficient if you had had no honour taken from you,—nobody expected that you could have had more heaped on a measure already full.

"My opinion in these matters can be of very little value; but it may be some satisfaction to know that this is the opinion of all parties and men of every denomination. Whatever fatigue and expense this business has occasioned is amply repaid you in additional honour and glory; and I hope you begin to think yourself that you have had a bargain.

"The illumination yesterday was universal, I believe, without the exception of a single house; we are continuing this night in the same manner.

"Poor Sir Hugh's house in Pall Mall was entirely gutted, and its contents burnt in St. James's-square, in spite of a large party of horse and foot, who came to protect it.

"Lord North and Lord Bute had their windows broke. The Admiralty gates were unhinged, and

the windows of Lord Sandwich and Lord Lisburne broke. Lord Mulgrave's house, I am told, has likewise suffered, as well as Captain Hood's. To-night, I hear, Sir Hugh is to be burnt in effigy before your door.

"I have taken the liberty, without waiting for leave, to lend your picture to an engraver, to make a large print from it.

"I am, with the greatest respect, your most humble and most obedient servant,

"JOSHUA REYNOLDS."

Not only were Lord North's windows broken, as mentioned by Sir Joshua, but the mob succeeded in forcing in the window-frames, and in gaining an entrance into the house. The fury of the populace became so ungovernable that it was necessary to read the riot act. A party of the Horse Guards succeeded at length in dispersing the crowd round the house of the Minister, which, however, they only quitted to commence an attack on Captain Hood's house, in Harley-street.

After Sir Hugh Palliser's furniture had been set on fire, it was with the utmost difficulty that the house itself was saved from sharing a similar fate. In the scuffle which ensued, the military killed one man and wounded several others. On Tower Hill an immense bonfire was made, in which Sir Hugh Palliser was burnt in effigy.

The newspapers of the day state that "many of the mob seemed not to be of the lower class."

Captain Brenton relates, that a lady told him "she actually saw Mr. Pitt himself break her windows."*

The gallant biographer doubts the fact. Be that as it may, many men of rank took part in the tumultuous proceedings on the occasion. The Duke of Ancaster† was taken amongst the rioters, and passed the night in the watchhouse. The late Lord Derby used frequently to describe the share he took in the riots; and there is yet living a right honourable gentleman, alike celebrated for his urbane manners, his poetical talents, and high conversational powers, who often describes with much glee the assistance he afforded in unhinging the Admiralty gates.

The military, both horse and foot, paraded the streets for several successive nights, and thus prevented much further damage. The house, however, of Lord Scarborough, which was in Audley-square, next door to Admiral Keppel's, was mistaken for that of Lord Bute, and all the windows were broken in consequence.

Nor were these demonstrations confined to the

* Brenton's Life of St. Vincent, vol. i. p. 24.

† Of the Duke of Ancaster it is said, that "the most amiable and engaging manners distinguished his private life, and the expectation and hopes of his country were raised high from the experiment which the very short period of his public conduct had given." He died in July of this year, 1779.

metropolis. Scarcely a town, nay, scarcely a hamlet, was without its illumination, or some other indication of the popular rejoicing at the Admiral's acquittal.*

Even the theatres partook of the general enthusiasm. At the Haymarket, an ode entitled "Victory," was performed in honour of the Admiral. At Drury Lane, the "Liverpool Prize," a new farce, contained several compliments to him, and the piece concluded with a chorus commemorating his acquittal. At the Dublin theatre, in a play entitled the "Invasion," a sailor is made to say "If my comrade had caused his vessels to come into my wake, and obeyed the signal for that purpose, execution would have been done on the French." In Sheridan's farce of the "Camp," when Gage represents his having sent lime for the soldiers' hair instead of flour, he added, "but *as I knew I was in the wrong*, I demanded a Court-martial on the sergeant."

All these allusions seem to have been eagerly caught by the audience, who always testified their approval by the most rapturous applause.

Some of the modes in which the national feeling

* Amongst those mentioned as having celebrated the event, either by illuminations, bonfires, balls, or entertainments, are His Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland, the Dukes of Portland, Marlborough, Richmond, Devonshire; Lords Abingdon, Bristol, Rockingham, Shelburne, Cholmondely, Hawke, Shuldham, Amherst; Sir George Saville, Sir W. W. Wynne, General Hodgson, Admiral Pigot.

was indicated are somewhat curious. The "Admiral Keppel" now became the favourite sign of the public houses. Engravings of his picture were to be seen in every print shop. Streets, particularly in the seaport towns, were called after his name. In London, blue cockades, with the word "Keppel," were almost universally worn. We are told that the Lady Waldegraves appeared at the opera in caps "à la Keppel." Some ladies at Southampton fitted out a privateer, which they called the "Admiral Keppel." The representatives of Sir Joshua Reynolds have still spoons and table-cloths inscribed with the words "Keppel and Virtue." Sir John Hamilton wore a "Keppel's head" on his button as long as he lived; and Lord Rockingham, to leave a more lasting memorial of the triumph of his friend, caused a magnificent Doric column, called "Keppel's Pillar," to be erected in the princely domains of Wentworth.*

* "While the trial of Admiral Keppel engaged the attention of our country, it so deeply interested the feelings of Hayley, that he composed a poetical epistle to that gallant officer on his honourable acquittal; but as the Admiral's brother, Lord Albemarle, had married a relation of the poet, he was apprehensive, if he published it with his name, he might be thought to have written rather to gratify a family to whom he was allied than from the nobler motive of a genuine patriotic spirit; he therefore kept his secret, and sent his poem to the Admiral, with the following anonymous billet:—

'Sir,—Permit me to entreat your acceptance of the following tribute to your public virtues. As the author has no other wish but that his performance may be thought not unworthy of the character to whom he has taken the liberty of addressing it, you will pardon him for enclosing his billet without a name, and allow him to remain one of

Keppel, who had quitted Portsmouth on the morning of Tuesday, the 16th of February, arrived in town at four o'clock in the afternoon. The road from Kensington, along which he had to pass, was thronged with spectators; it was with much difficulty he prevented them from unharnessing the horses, and dragging him to his residence in Audley-square. Here a large concourse had assembled, and received him in the most flattering manner. As soon as he got into his house, he thanked the assembled multitude for their kindness and partiality towards him. Shortly afterwards, he went to the Marquis of Rockingham, where he received the congratulations of his friends. This evening, the whole of London was again illuminated, the bells rang, and the ships in the river kept up a constant discharge of cannon throughout the night. The next day, the following hand-bill was placarded in the principal streets of London:—

"Admiral Keppel's friends in the city, at the same time that they highly approve of the grateful joy shewn by all ranks of people on the happy public event of Admiral Keppel's acquittal, are extremely desirous that the further continuance of illumination should be stopped, as burthensome and

the many unknown admirers of your personal courage and your public conduct.'

"This nameless poem was published about the middle of January, 1779."—Memoirs of William Hayley, Esq., vol. i. book vi. ch. i. p. 181.

expensive to many people; and in this particular they assure the public that they conform to Admiral Keppel's wishes, and act in consequence of his most earnest request."

The intelligence of Keppel's acquittal did not reach London until between eight and nine o'clock at night on the 11th of February. The next day, Colonel Barré* rose in his place in the House of Commons, and, after an animated speech on the court-martial, highly to the honour of its intended victim, moved—

"That the thanks of this House be given to the Honourable Admiral Augustus Keppel for his distinguished courage, conduct, and ability in defending this kingdom in the course of the last summer, effectually protecting its trade, and more particularly for his having gloriously upheld the honour of the British flag on the 27th and 28th of July last.

Sir George Saville seconded the motion.

The question being put, the *Ayes* were thundered with a combination of voices, while but one negative

* Colonel Isaac Barré entered the army at an early age, and was dangerously wounded at the taking of Quebec. In West's celebrated picture of the death of Wolfe, he is represented as one of a group of officers collected round the expiring general. Writing to Mr. Pitt some time after this victory, he says, "The trophies I can boast only indicate how much I suffered; my zealous and sole advocate killed, my left eye rendered useless, and the ball still in my head." He was afflicted with blindness for twenty years, but continued a cheerful companion to the last. Barré entered Parliament in 1761. A cotemporary says of him, "He speaks like a soldier, thinks like a politician, and delivers his sentiments like a man."

was heard, which came from Mr. Strutt,* and drew upon him the eyes of the whole House.

Admiral Keppel, on arriving in London, addressed the following letter to Sir Fletcher Norton.†

ADMIRAL KEPPEL TO THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

"Audley Square, Feb. 16th, 1779.

"SIR,—I arrived this afternoon at my house, from Portsmouth, not in very good health, yet I should think it my duty, after the honourable notice that I hear the House of Commons have been pleased to take of my services, not to let a day pass without my appearing in the House; but as I really find myself much fatigued, and fear I may not be able to attend to-morrow, I take the liberty to mention it to you, Sir, and at the same time to say that I certainly shall not fail in my attendance on Thursday. I must beg to make my excuses to you for the trouble I am giving you, and am, Sir,

"With great respect,

"Your most obedient and humble servant,

"A. KEPPEL."

As soon as the result of the trial became known, a similar distinction was conferred by the House of Lords. The vote of thanks was moved by Lord

* Mr. Strutt, M.P. for Maldon, grandfather of the present Lord Rayleigh.

† Created Baron Grantley in 1782.

Rockingham, and seconded by the Duke of Bolton. Lord Sandwich and other peers on the ministerial side, called loudly for the order of the day, but the opposition becoming too powerful, the Lord Chancellor Thurlow "declared it was a matter of such indifference, that he wished the noble Marquess might be permitted to proceed." The motion was carried unanimously, and the Lord Chancellor, in obedience to the orders of the House, sent a copy of the vote to Admiral Keppel, which he accompanied with the following letter:—

LORD THURLOW TO ADMIRAL KEPPEL.

"SIR,—I have the satisfaction to have received the commands of the House of Lords, *nemine dissentiente*, to transmit to you the thanks of their Lordships, for your conduct in defending this kingdom, protecting its trade, and maintaining the honour of its flag, expressed in the fullest and highest terms of applause.

"No private voice can add to so splendid an encomium. Permit me, however, to congratulate you on this distinguished mark of approbation, which a grateful country confers on your zeal and merit in the service of the public.

"I have the honour to be, Sir,

"Your most obedient humble servant,

"THURLOW.

"Ormond Street, 16th Feb., 1779."

ADMIRAL KEPPEL'S REPLY.

"Audley Square, 17th Feb. 1779.

"My Lord,—The very distinguished notice which the House of Lords have been pleased to take of my services in the course of last summer, confers on me the highest honour. The advantages which their Lordships have thought worthy of their thanks are due to God's blessing, to the gallant behaviour of many great and able officers who served in the fleet, and to the bravery of the seamen.

"I can only say, that the warmest gratitude for this great honour and favour will make me ever desirous of meriting it by the most strenuous endeavour to serve my country.

"I beg leave to return your Lordship my best thanks for the flattering and polite manner in which you have been pleased to communicate to me the resolution of the House.

"I have the honour to be, with much respect,

"Your Lordship's

"Most obedient and very humble servant,

"A. Keppel."

The sanguinary proceedings of Government against a young man of the name of Mackay is thus alluded to by Fox, in a speech he delivered in the House of Commons, on the 17th of February, in reply to an aspersion thrown out against Lord and Sir William Howe:—

"Every commander was to be abused and traduced. How was a man to get into the esteem of administration? Why, he was to blacken the character of our commanders, and he was sure to succeed. On the other hand, let a man but speak well of them, and he was sure to draw the enmity of ministry upon him. Hence Sir William Howe, and his noble brother (Lord Howe), Sir Guy Carleton, General Burgoyne, Admiral Keppel, were the objects of ministerial malignancy, and in proportion as they were written down, so was the person by whom it was done raised in the estimation of administration. Every attack upon them was made for government. But the ministry had no desire to go into inquiries of the American war. They had enough of inquiry. The court-martial on Admiral Keppel had given them a dose. They wanted no more inquiries. It had furnished them with a text on the conduct of their own commanders, and they were sick. Yes, they were sick of it to their souls; and while a general happiness had diffused itself through all ranks, while people of all denominations were, in a manner, intoxicated with joy, felicitating one another at so glorious, so illustrious an event, propitious equally to the cause of virtue and of maritime glory, those base, those treacherous, those pitiful ministers were shut up in darkness, brooding o'er their horrors of disappointment. They saw not the illuminations, but retired from the transports of the

world. The portly building of the Admiralty wore a dismal aspect, sorrow hung about it. But the malice of administration was to check, if possible, the happiness felt on the occasion. An obsolete act of Parliament was therefore raked up, a clause resorted to, to try capitally a young man found in the most alarming act of breaking the windows of Sir Hugh Palliser's house! This act of Parliament, so seldom heard of, and never but on the most extraordinary occasions, was to be used to the conviction of this young man to-morrow morning, as he understood from very high authority. Not for breaking windows—not for hurting Sir Hugh Palliser's house, much less demolishing it—but for being pleased at the acquittal of Admiral Keppel! That was the crime for which he was to be hanged—that was the crime for which he had been prosecuted with so horrid a severity, and the very counsel he had retained for his trial taken away. In whatever point of view he considered this, horror and indignation suppressed awhile all power of reproach. No language could do justice to the infamy of the proceeding. Did the Attorney-general proceed against Balf and Macquirk for the murder of Mr. Clark at Brentford? And yet is a boy to be tried for his life because he was heard to halloo for Admiral Keppel, and in the tumult of his joy found to break a window or two! But why was it? Why, truly the spirit of the people was to be depressed, and

because the ministry failed in their designs to murder Admiral Keppel, the life of an unhappy youth was to be pitifully sacrificed to their resentment."

The next day was that named by Keppel for receiving the thanks of the Commons. At an early hour the house was crowded, and the streets were filled with spectators. The Speaker took the chair about three o'clock, but no kind of business was transacted for an hour, since the members were determined to wait until Keppel arrived. Mr. Wilkes informed the House that, immediately after thanks were given to Admiral Keppel, he should move to rescind the resolution of the House relative to the Middlesex election.* Several of the ministerial members called to him to proceed at once, but he declined—"as he intended to take the sense of the House on the motion, and that such a step must necessarily disturb the strangers who had assembled to witness the thanks of the House given to Admiral Keppel, he could not be guilty of so great an incivility, and should therefore wait until their curiosity was gratified."

About four o'clock, Keppel, accompanied by Admiral Pigot, entered the House, amidst the cheers of the populace, and "an agitation of spirits that has seldom been seen. Every member, of whatever

* "That John Wilkes, Esq., having been, in this session of Parliament, expelled this House, was and is incapable of being elected a member to serve in this present Parliament."

party, seeming in a manner to vie with each other in that sense of joy with which they were so sensibly touched, and which, indeed, spread a pleasing lustre on every countenance."* "The Admiral having taken his seat, and the tumult of joy subsided to the calm of admiration, the Speaker addressed him in the following words:"—

"ADMIRAL KEPPEL,—This House have done you the distinguished honour of ordering their thanks be given to you—an honour never conferred but upon extraordinary merit; which thanks it is my duty to communicate to you in your place.

"After having sat so long in this chair, I hope it is unnecessary to declare that I have been always happy to obey the orders of the House, and I have now a particular satisfaction in that obedience; indeed, every generous mind must feel satisfaction when the day of honourable acquittal succeeds to the day of severe trial; and this pleasure was, I believe, never more general nor more sincere than upon the present occasion.

"You, sir, were called by your Sovereign, with the approbation of all descriptions of men, particularly those of your own profession, to a station of the utmost difficulty, and of the highest importance. The safety of this country, and the honour of the British flag, were trusted in your hands,

* London Chronicle, Feb. 20, 1779.

when the enemy was expected upon our coast; and, notwithstanding the most able discharge of this great and momentous trust, you were accused of misconduct and neglect of duty. But, after a very long and full investigation, by men in every respect the best qualified to judge, that charge appeared to be ill-grounded and malicious; and your judges have unanimously and honourably acquitted you, and have further added, that your conduct, on the 27th and 28th days of July last, was that of a judicious, brave, and experienced officer. Surely, then, it cannot be matter of surprise that extraordinary marks of respect and esteem are shewn to such a character. We now know with certainty that our confidence in you was not misplaced; and we entertain a well-grounded hope that there still remain, among the naval officers, talents and abilities fully equal to this dangerous crisis.

"Amidst this general joy, I cannot help repeating the singular pleasure which I feel in giving you the thanks of this House, which I now do, for your distinguished courage, conduct, and ability, in defending this kingdom in the course of the last summer, effectually protecting its trade, and more particularly for your having gloriously upheld the honour of the British flag on the 27th and 28th of July last."

Keppel, who had been standing during this address, replied—

"Mr. Speaker,—It is impossible, by any ex-

pressions I can use, to do justice to my feelings of gratitude to the House for the honour they have done me by their approbation of my conduct.

"The good opinion of my fellow-citizens, expressed by the representatives of the nation, cannot but be received by me as a most acceptable addition to the satisfaction I felt in the recent sentence, to which you have been pleased to allude, of a court-martial; the result of a full and deliberate inquiry, expressive of their sentiments of the subject referred to their examination, in terms equally honourable to themselves and me.

"The pleasure I feel at this moment is not a little heightened by the unavoidable recollection of the very different emotions I felt when I was last in this House, and in this place.

"I should be guilty of great injustice if, on an occasion like the present, I neglected to inform this House that my efforts for the public service, in the instances in which the House has been pleased to distinguish them, were most zealously seconded by many as gallant and able officers as the navy of England ever produced; to whose attention and spirit, next to the Divine Providence, the success of these efforts ought to be in a great measure ascribed. I cannot sit down without returning to you, sir, personally, my particular thanks for the very, very obliging terms in which you have executed the commands of the House."

The Admiral having said this, was overcome by that extreme sensibility that characterized him, and immediately retired from the House, returning home amidst the applause and acclamation of a numerous populace. He afterwards dined, by invitation, with a large party of the nobility, at the Thatched House Tavern, in St. James's-street.

The next day, he attended the levee, accompanied by his brother, General Keppel, and a large number of naval officers, among whom were Admirals Young, Sir James Douglas, Sir Robert Harland, Pigot, Lord Shuldham, Campbell; Captains the Hon. Robert Boyle Walsingham, the Hon. Keith Stewart, the Hon. Thomas Windsor, Joshua Rowley, Jonathan Faulkner. He is said to have been graciously received.

On the 20th of February, the day fixed by Keppel, a committee, appointed by the Common Council of London, waited upon him, to present him with the freedom and thanks of the city, and to invite him to dine with them at the London Tavern.

At two o'clock, the committee, consisting of eight aldermen, thirteen common councilmen, and the city officers, dressed in their robes of office, formed a procession from Guildhall, composed of twenty carriages. The whole deputation wore blue favours in their hats, as did also their coachmen and attendants.

On arriving in Audley-square, Mr. Alderman

Crossly presented Admiral Keppel with the following resolutions, which he prefaced by an appropriate speech :—

"A Common Council, holden in the chamber of the Guildhall of the City of London, on Friday, the 12th day of February, 1779,—PLUMBE, Mayor,—

"Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this Court be given to the Honourable Augustus Keppel, Admiral of the Blue, for his long and faithful services to this country; for his ready acceptance, at the call of his Sovereign, of the important charge of Commander of the British fleet in time of imminent danger; for the anxious attention that appears in every instance of his conduct to the safety of this country; for his judicious, able, and spirited behaviour on the 27th of July last, in his attack on the French fleet; for his glorious and gallant efforts to renew the engagement in the afternoon of that day—efforts rendered unsuccessful through the want of obedience to his orders by the Vice-Admiral of the Blue; for the great protection given by him to our trade, to which entirely we are indebted for the safe arrival of the East and West India fleets; for his animating conduct and example, happily followed by such exertion of spirit and intrepidity in the officers and seamen of the British fleet as conveyed terror to our enemies, and obliged them to seek shelter in their own ports by an ignominious flight."

Then followed a second resolution, that the freedom of the city should "be presented in a box made of the heart of oak, with a proper device, ornamented and embellished with gold."

Admiral Keppel replied—

"I receive with the greatest sense of gratitude the approbation which the City of London has been pleased to shew, of my endeavours to serve my King and country.

"The constitutional zeal which this great city has

ever testified for the liberties of this kingdom, and for the succession in his Majesty's royal house, renders every mark of their regard a very high honour.

"I am happy that the care of many excellent officers and brave seamen under my command, last summer, has contributed to the preservation of their trade, which makes so large a part of the national interest."

"The concourse of people that assembled on this great and joyful occasion," says a London paper, "was immense, and testified in the most expressive sense, the gratitude, the affection, and the veneration of a great people, for a good, a brave, and an injured man." At three o'clock the whole party set out for the London Tavern. Keppel, who kept a journal of these proceedings, says, "I was accompanied into the city by Vice-Admiral Sir Robert Harland, Rear-Admiral Campbell, the Right Hon. Lord Richard Cavendish, who had served as a volunteer with me on board the Victory, on the 27th of July; Mr. George Rogers, my secretary; Lieut.-General Keppel, my brother; Vice-Admiral Lord Shuldham, and Vice-Admiral Pigot."

On quitting Audley-square, the following procession was formed: the two city marshals on horseback, their horses adorned with blue ribbons; Alderman Crossly, as senior alderman, in his own carriage, with a sailor behind, carrying a blue flag, with the word "KEPPEL" in large red letters; next

that of the Admiral, with Lord Richard Cavendish on his right hand; after them four naval officers, the other Aldermen, Commoners, and City Officers, in their own carriages. The procession came down Bond-street, St. James's-street, and so on to the Strand. "It is impossible," say the public journals of the day, "to do justice to the honest joy of the people. From the instant the procession set out to the moment that it concluded, it was one unremitted burst of rapture and transport. The feelings of the crowd were expressed in their countenance: a glow of wild and ungovernable triumph sat on every face, and spoke the sympathetic hearts that dwelt within. When they came opposite to the gloomy, deserted, and partly demolished house of Sir Hugh Palliser, a general hiss of execration arose." Lord George Germain's house was treated in the same manner. At Charing Cross the mob, who were now become very numerous, took the horses from the Admiral's carriage, and dragged him themselves; his coachman at the same time was obliged to relinquish his seat "in favour of a number of Jack Tars, who swarmed about the carriage, like bees round a hive,"* and hoisted a blue flag.† Soon after this the pro-

* Town and Country Magazine for 1779.

† Mr. Upcott has in his possession a profile print of Keppel, below which is a representation of his triumphal entry into the city; a group of sailors are here described as occupying the Admiral's coach-box, in the manner described in the text.

cession was joined by the Marine Society, with blue flags and emblematical streamers. At Temple Bar, a band of music met him, playing "See the conquering Hero comes;" and another at the Obelisk, at the bottom of Fleet-street, where he was also greeted with a discharge from several small brass guns. In this manner, amidst the shouts of the city, he proceeded and arrived at the London Tavern.

The evening was spent with a degree of rejoicing hitherto unknown. The Admiral and his friends stayed till eleven o'clock. He was again attended by the multitude, who took his horses out, and conducted him to his house in Audley-square. So great was the crowd and pressure, that it was past one o'clock before he reached his own house. London was this night again illuminated.

On the 16th of February, as appears from a MS. journal kept by Keppel, Mr. Long, Chairman of the West India Company, presented him with an address in the name of that body.

In his reply, he said, "The great and memorable sea officers I served under, during part of two wars, Lord Anson, Lord Hawke, Admiral Boscawen, and Sir George Pocock, were such examples to me in their constant attention to the trade, that I owe much of the sentiments that have directed me in my duty in this particular to them. Their principles prompted the expressions in my letter to Mr. Long."*

* Keppel's MS. journal.

In the same journal is the following entry :—

"Some irregularities having been committed by the populace, on my return from dining in the City, on the 20th, I wrote the following letter to Mr. Long :—

"'Audley Square, Monday morning,
Feb. 22nd, 1779.

"'SIR,—The honour intended me by the Society of the West India Planters and Merchants, in their invitation to dine with them in the city, I shall esteem with much gratitude, as a mark of their very kind attention to me, and I felt at the time of the invitation the greatest satisfaction from it; but the experience of what happened on Saturday night, from the extraordinary concourse of people, as I returned from the dinner in the City, which the Committee of Aldermen and Common Council of London had done me the honour to give me, had led me to be apprehensive that the honour of another public dinner at this time in the City may be attended with the like consequences.

"'I cannot but be proud of the demonstrations of joy so generally expressed, and especially in this metropolis; yet I should feel myself much reprehensible if I afforded a pretence to any to say that I encouraged any excesses at a late hour of the night, which tend to alarm and disturb the quiet of the town; and the more so, as those excesses have

been attended with real prejudice to the health and property of many persons, and I can truly say that I did all in my power to prevent the last instance of it.

" ' These considerations, I must own, operate so much upon my mind, as to have at last determined me to beg, Sir, that you will, in my name, present my most grateful thanks to the gentlemen, entreating their permission to decline accepting their most obliging and kind invitation at this time.

" ' I trust you will be persuaded of the true cause which weighs with me, to relinquish what would be to me the highest gratification.

" ' I am, Sir, &c.

" ' A. KEPPEL.

" ' P.S.—Admiral Campbell is so obliging as to undertake the delivery of this letter.' "

In addition to these marks of approbation from the different public bodies in London, Admiral Keppel was elected an associate of "the Grand and Laudable Association of Antigallicans," an honour he seems to have highly prized. He also received congratulatory addresses from the borough of Thetford, from the inhabitants of Great Yarmouth, from the Associated Body of Merchants in Liverpool, from the town and county of Nottingham, and from Newcastle-upon-Tyne. He was further presented with the freedom of the city of

Norwich, the city of York, the city of Londonderry, the city of Dublin, enclosed in a box of Shilelah oak, richly ornamented with gold, and of the Corporation of the Trinity House; "which last," says Keppel, "I received by the hands of Lord Ravensworth, accompanied with an elegant box of gold."*

The following correspondence will exhibit proofs of esteem, equally flattering, though of a somewhat different nature from those just recorded:—

ADMIRAL KEPPEL TO JOHN DUNNING, ESQ.†

"Audley-square, 23rd February, 1779.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I am much indebted to you for your advice and attendance on my trial at Portsmouth, and attribute the production of my innocence in so clear a light, in a great measure, to your good counsel and assistance, together with that of Mr. Lee and Mr. Erskine. I beg your acceptance of the enclosed notes‡ as a testimony of gratitude for such essential services, but for the still greater obligations I feel myself under for the many marks of personal friendship and kindness you

* Keppel's MS. Journal.

† Created Lord Ashburton in 1782. Burke says of him, "there was not a man of any profession or in any situation of a more erect and independent spirit, of a more proud honour, a more manly mind, a more firm and determined integrity." He died in 1783.

‡ Two bank notes of 500*l.* each.

have shewn me, which although I shall ever be attempting to requite, I am sensible I must ever remain your debtor.

" I am, &c.

" A. KEPPEL.

JOHN DUNNING, ESQ. TO ADMIRAL KEPPEL.

" Lincoln's Inn, 1st March, 1779.

DEAR SIR,—I intended myself the honour of calling yesterday in Audley-square, but being prevented, I take the liberty to return to you under this cover the enclosed notes, and to account for not having done it sooner, by assuring you that I employ my first leisure since I had the mortification to learn that you had left them at my chambers.

" If I had attended your trial professionally (which I certainly would have done, as you desired it, if I had not been convinced that it was unnecessary, and would have been useless,) I should not have refused a proper professional compensation; but after having declined that attendance, I am not a little hurt at the idea of being supposed capable of allowing myself to be paid one thousand pounds for having passed a pleasant day or two at Portsmouth, where I had the satisfaction of seeing and hearing enough to enable me to foresee and foretell that, whatever

might be the length of the inquiry, the issue of it must be what it has been. You have, indeed, been justly as well as triumphantly acquitted of a malicious and ill-founded charge; but it is nevertheless true that you have given me an occasion for a complaint that is well-founded and not malicious; and I do not know how you can make me amends but by taking back your notes, and doing me the justice to believe that no pecuniary consideration can add to the respect and esteem with which I have the honour to subscribe myself,

"Your faithful and obedient servant,

"J. DUNNING."

ADMIRAL KEPPEL TO JOHN LEE, ESQ.

"Audley-square, 23rd February, 1779.

MY DEAR SIR,—I beg you to receive the enclosed notes* for the advice and attendance you were so good as to give me in the course of my trial at Portsmouth. It is to your assistance, together with that of Mr. Dunning and Mr. Erskine, that I am principally indebted for the fair light in which my cause was made to appear; and if you suffered much from so long and so tedious an attendance, I hope it has been some recompence to a mind like

* Two bank notes of 500*l.* each.

yours to have protected innocence, and to have formed an acquaintance with some honest seamen, whose plain and upright hearts are so consonant to your own.

"I shall look upon it for myself as one of the most fortunate events of this business, that it has given an opportunity of improving my acquaintance with you, and I hope it has laid the foundation of a mutual, sincere, and lasting friendship.

"I am, &c.

"A. KEPPEL."

JOHN LEE, ESQ., TO ADMIRAL KEPPEL.

"Lincoln's Inn Fields, 24th February.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I did not come home till twelve last night, and therefore could not answer your kind letter till this morning. I shall preserve that letter as long as I live, and when I die I will have it transmitted to my descendants, if I chance to have any, as a memorial that I was honoured by assisting you in a cause that secures to you a noble immortality, and reflects some degree of credit even on the most inconsiderable supporter of it. But you must permit me, not to offer, but to insist on my declining to accept the very munificent present which your letter encloses. I can never endure

myself if I receive any reward for attending you, besides the consciousness of having wished to serve you, and the high honour of having obtained your thanks.

" Mrs. Lee's zeal for my honour (for, indeed, she has as little vanity as any woman,) prompts me to propose to you another thing in return for the enclosed, and I take the liberty to do it. Will you make me a present of your picture, painted by Mr. Dance, who takes excellent likenesses, that I may keep it, and my family after me? *That* I would accept; but I trust you will excuse my declining most pertinaciously to accept anything else.

" Among the millions of persons who are sincerely rejoicing at the triumphs of truth, and justice, and excellence, over fraud, and meanness, and malice, and tyranny, there is not one that enjoys them more than,

" Dear sir,

" Your faithful friend and obliged servant,

" JOHN LEE."*

* Lee and Dunning were great friends, and would now and then give one another a friendly rub. On one occasion, Dunning, while cross-examining a witness somewhat roughly, was telling Lee that he had that morning bought some manors in Devonshire. " I wish," replied Lee, " that you would bring them (manners) to Westminster Hall." Lee was a good, sound, constitutional lawyer, and became Solicitor-general in 1782.

ADMIRAL KEPPEL TO THE HON. THOMAS ERSKINE.

"Audley-square, 23rd February, 1779.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Do me the favour to accept the enclosed notes* as an acknowledgment of the zealous and indefatigable industry you have shewn in the long and tedious course of my court-martial. It is to your unremitting labours, together with the assistance of Mr. Dunning and Mr. Lee, that I chiefly owe its having been attended with so honourable a conclusion. I shall be very happy if I have been in any degree the means of furnishing you with opportunities of shewing those talents which only wanted to be made known to carry you to the summit of your profession.

"I shall ever rejoice in this commencement of a friendship which I hope daily to improve.

"I am, &c., A. KEPPEL."

Erskine called in Audley-square, to answer this letter in person; but not finding Admiral Keppel at home, he wrote the following note in the porter's hall:—

MR. ERSKINE TO ADMIRAL KEPPEL.

"Audley-square, Tuesday afternoon.

"You must, no doubt, my dear Sir, have been very much surprised at receiving no answer to your

* Two bank notes of 500*l.* each.

most generous letter, but, I trust, you are well enough acquainted with my temper and feelings to find out the reason, and to pardon me. I was, indeed, altogether unable to answer it; I could not submit to do injustice to my gratitude and affection, and was therefore obliged to be silent till I could wait upon you in person; and, having missed you, must be silent still. I shall, therefore, only say that the generous present you have sent me is out of all kind of bounds and measure, even if the occasion had afforded an opportunity of rendering them; how much the more when your own ability and the absurdity of the occasion wholly disappointed my zeal. At all events, the honour of attending Admiral Keppel would have been in itself a most ample reward, an honour which, whatever my future fortunes may be, I shall ever consider as the brightest and happiest in my life, and which my children's children will hereafter claim as an inheritance.

"I do most sincerely pray God that every blessing may attend you, and that you may be spared for the protection of a country which has proved itself worthy of protection. My heart must ever be with you. Adieu, my dear Sir, and believe me to be, with the greatest respect and regard,

"Your most grateful and affectionate
"humble servant,
"T. ERSKINE."

Erskine's circumstances at this time were such that he would not have been justified in declining Admiral Keppel's fee. For eight years he had been struggling as a married man, with a family, and on so limited an income, that he was compelled to use the most rigid economy. Early in life, he had entered the naval service, which he afterwards relinquished for that of the army; but, finding neither congenial to his taste, he adopted the profession of the law. It was only in the Trinity Term of the preceding year (1778) that Erskine had been called to the bar. Before the close of the year his defence of Captain Baillie, for a libel on Lord Sandwich, laid the foundation of his future fame. Erskine's knowledge of sea phrases, and of the rules and usages of courts-martial, peculiarly qualified him for conducting a naval trial. In 1783 he was elected a Member of Parliament for Portsmouth, a distinction he derived from the reputation he had acquired in defending Admiral Keppel. He continued to represent the same borough until he was raised to the peerage by the title of Baron Erskine, in 1806. He was "by nature an orator; ready, acute, bold, imaginative, with varied powers of elocution; a melodious voice, and fine person, combined with manners singularly bland, courteous, and respectful."*

While addresses and congratulations were pour-

* Wade's British History, p. 808.

ing in from every quarter, the Admiral retired to Bath for the recovery of his health. Before setting out, he wrote the following letter to George the Third:—

ADMIRAL KEPPEL TO THE KING.

"SIR,—The goodness with which your Majesty has always been pleased to receive any observations I have taken the liberty to lay at your Majesty's feet, concerning the situation to which your Majesty did me the honour to call me, of commanding the fleet for the defence of your Majesty's kingdom, makes me presume, with all possible duty and respect, to submit the following considerations to your Majesty's wisdom and goodness.

"Your Majesty will recollect that when I received your Majesty's orders to take this command, I obeyed without difficulty, and acquainted your Majesty that, as I had no friend among your Majesty's Ministers to support me, I should rely on your Majesty, and on the good opinion I should hope to deserve of my country, for protection.

"I beg leave to assure your Majesty that my conduct towards your Ministers has not only been fair and upright, but open and unreserved.

"When I undertook this great trust, I resolved not to make, but to surmount difficulties. I made

no complaints. I exposed no neglect. I divulged no secrets; on the contrary, I acted towards them with the same confidence I would have shewn to my best friend. I am sorry to inform your Majesty that this confidence has been ill-requited. My return to St. Helen's, on the 27th of June, when, notwithstanding the opinion of the First Lord of the Admiralty communicated to me, that with twenty such capital ships (after the detachment sent with Admiral Byron) as I should still have under my command, I should be a fair match for the Brest fleet, I found myself likely to meet with a force by one-third superior, remains to this day without a syllable of official approbation, as does the taking the French frigates. The utmost word which could be got from any one of them, and that not till it was extorted, was a cold negative of Lord North in the House of Commons, saying that the prudence and propriety of the measure exempted me from *blame*.

"The Board of Admiralty *have*, without a moment's hesitation, ordered me to prepare for a trial for my life and honour, on recriminating charges brought against me by Sir Hugh Palliser, a Vice-Admiral under my command, and who had first libelled me in a common newspaper. These charges the least inquiry would have shewn to be as malicious and ill-founded as they have since been adjudged.

"They have made use of your *Majesty's name*, and urged, *detriment to the State*, as motives to induce me to submit to an illegal prohibition of my producing, either to my counsel or the court-martial, the instructions under which I had acted, and which I had informed them my counsel had required to see, as necessary to enable them to give me the best advice how to make my defence. For the same persons to call an officer to a trial for his life, and then to limit him in his defence by *their discretion*, is so glaring an injustice, and so bad an example, that it is unnecessary for me to lay it open to your Majesty's goodness and wisdom. I am really afraid that the precedent of my submission may be very mischievous. As far as relates to myself, there could be no doubt but that your Majesty's name, and the possibility of the production of the instructions being detrimental to the State, could make me forego even the most essential means of defence. Happily, I have not stood in need of my instructions to obtain the most honourable acquittal, but the case might have been otherwise; and, now that I am no longer personally concerned, I beg leave to add myself to that respectable list of Admirals who have dutifully laid before your Majesty their sense of the prejudice which this conduct of the Admiralty may cause to your Majesty's service.

"It would be taking up a great deal of your Majesty's time, were I to mention every instance in which I have experienced want of support from your Majesty's servants. Those I have mentioned are notorious; and, although I shall ever place the most implicit confidence in your Majesty's personal goodness and protection, your Majesty must be sensible that such marks of slight and neglect, to say no worse, from your Majesty's Ministers, who still enjoy your Majesty's confidence, must render it very difficult, if not impossible, for *any officer*, in a command of importance, to serve with satisfaction or credit to himself, and, of course, with benefit to your Majesty's service.

"Thus situated, it would be presumption in me to wish to know what dispositions your Majesty may have in contemplation, but I should be greatly wanting in the duty I owe your Majesty, if, at the same time that I beg leave to renew the most sincere professions of duty and loyalty, and the most ardent wish of serving your Majesty, I did not humbly implore your Majesty's permission not to go again to sea under men on whom, I have learned from experience, I cannot depend for that support which is necessary for every commander.

"I have thought it my duty, sir, to state these matters with all humility, for your Majesty's consideration, before I went to Bath, where my health

makes it necessary for me to go, that if your Majesty should think proper for me to strike my flag, my successor may have the more time to prepare for service. I am ready to quit my command to-day, or to preserve it as long as may be convenient for your Majesty's arrangements and consistent with my own honour; but I trust your Majesty will see my reputation cannot continue safe in hands who have already done all they could to ruin it.

"I beg leave to assure your Majesty, that in all situations, public or private, it will always be my most zealous desire to prove myself your Majesty's most respectful, dutiful, and loyal subject and servant,

"AUGUSTUS KEPPEL."*

It was probably this letter to the King which induced the Admiralty to ask Keppel whether he intended to continue in the command of the Channel fleet. The question led to the following correspondence:—

ADMIRAL KEPPEL TO PHILIP STEPHENS, ESQ., SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY.

"Bath, 15th March, 1779.

"SIR,—I have received your letter of the 12th instant, signifying the commands you had received from the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, to

* Lord St. Vincent's MSS.

inform me that, 'As the season for sending the Western squadron to sea is now approaching, and as it is necessary that the equipment of that squadron should be forwarded with all possible expedition, it becomes important that their Lordships should know with certainty whether I mean to continue in my present command; they have therefore directed you to write that letter to inquire whether they may depend upon my services in that station.'

"I must desire you to inform their Lordships that, before I left London, I did, in the humblest manner, lay before his Majesty my situation as Commander-in-chief of the Western squadron, and the treatment I felt I had met with from those in authority.

"And as I do not seek for fresh opportunities to complain, I can only express that his Majesty has not an officer more ready to risk his life, or forego his ease, for the service of his country than myself, when I can at the same time be secure of my honour. I may assert that the public will not be well served by any officer, unless he is confident that his reputation and upright endeavours will be well supported by his Majesty's Ministers.

"I presume, Sir, that their Lordships, having read so far, cannot remain in doubt what I think of their treatment towards me; but the respect I

think due to the dignity of their office, and the authority of it, prevents me from entering upon it in this letter, further than to acquaint you, for their information, in answer to your letter of the 12th, wrote by their direction, that it is next to impossimble for me to render creditable and beneficial service to the King and the nation, by my continuing in the command of the Western squadron, under the direction and authority of those whose approbation in the execution of my duty and support afterwards, experience has taught me, I cannot depend upon.

"I am, Sir, &c.

"A. KEPPEL."

PHILIP STEPHENS, ESQ., TO THE HON. AUGUSTUS KEPPEL, ADMIRAL OF THE BLUE, ETC.

"Admiralty Office, 18th March, 1779.

"SIR,—I have received your letter of the 15th instant, in return to mine of the 12th, and having laid the same before my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, I am commanded by their Lordships to inform you that they find it impossible, in this kind of communication, to enter upon the discussion of the degrees of attention and respect which have been shewn you, both before and since you took upon you the command of the Western squadron. They must leave it to yourself to recollect, if pos-

sible, the instance, in any period of time, wherein an admiral, in any command or station, hath had more regard shewn to every suggestion, public or private, received from him. Their Lordships, therefore, cannot avoid expressing their surprise and concern at your finding it necessary to resign your command on account of such complaints; but as it is of great importance that the Western squadron should be got in readiness for sea forthwith, and another commander appointed, they have commanded me to send you the enclosed order to strike your flag, to which I beg leave to refer you, and have the honour to be, Sir, &c.

" PH. STEPHENS."

" By the Commissioners for executing the Office of Lord High Admiral of Great Britain and Ireland, &c.

" You are hereby required and directed to strike your flag, and come on shore.

" Given under our hands, the 18th day of March, 1779.

" SANDWICH.
" J. BULLER.
" LISBURNE.
" W. PENTON.

" To the Hon. Augustus Keppel, Admiral of the Blue, and Commander-in-chief of a Squadron of his Majesty's ships, employed and to be employed in the Channel Soundings, &c. &c."

ADMIRAL KEPPEL TO PHILIP STEPHENS, ESQ., SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY.

"Bath, 21st March, 1779.

"SIR,—The order of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, dated the 18th instant, directing and requiring me to strike my flag and come on shore, which came enclosed in your letter of the same date, I received with satisfaction, because it relieves me from further correspondence with the present Board of Admiralty. Yet, I must observe, there is so much offence conceived in the expression of your letter, written by the Lords' directions, that nothing less than the deference due from me to the Board of Admiralty would prevent my replying in terms that would not be pleasing to their Lordships.

"I am, Sir, &c.

"A. KEPPEL."

CHAPTER VIII.

DISCONTENTS IN THE NAVY—THE BRITISH FLEET DRIVEN UP THE CHANNEL—UNPROTECTED STATE OF PLYMOUTH AND PORTSMOUTH—CORRESPONDENCE.

Proceedings in Parliament—"Little Keppel" and "Black Dick"—Discontents in the navy—The fleets of France and Spain appear off Plymouth—Are prevented from landing by an easterly wind—Pursue the British fleet into Spithead—Unprotected state of Plymouth and Portsmouth—Letters from Mr. Burke, Lord Shelburne, and Mr. Lee, to Keppel—Debate on the Address—Letters from Keppel to Lord Rockingham—Captain Jervis to Mrs. Rickitts—Vote of thanks to Sir George Rodney.

1779.

THE conduct of the government towards Admiral Keppel led, as might be expected, to many angry discussions in Parliament, and night after night a series of charges was brought against the ministers. On a motion of Mr. Dunning, condemnatory of the Admiralty, in so immediately directing a court-martial upon Admiral Keppel, Mr. Fox declared "that the man, the Earl of Sandwich, (he named him,) who deprived this country of two of her bravest admirals, (Keppel and Howe,) was a greater

traitor to the nation than the man who sat fire to the dock-yards."*

Lord North attempted, in his reply, to distinguish the fame, services, and reputation attending the conduct of Admiral Keppel, from what he called the false and spurious pretensions built upon them by the friends of the present motion. His Lordship launched forth into the highest panegyric on the Admiral, whom he compared to a first-rate sailing before the wind, with all his sails set and streamers flying; the opposition, he said, "had forced themselves into the shrouds, some on the yards, &c.; they

> 'In their little bark, attendant sail,
> Pursue the triumph, and partake the gale.'"

After pursuing these metaphors for some time, his Lordship compared the supporters of the motion "to barnacles, which fasten upon a ship's bottom, render it foul, and impede its progress. In one view, he observed, they added to the triumph, in the other, they rendered the Admiral's bottom foul, his courses slow, and if he did not shake them off in time, they might soon render a repair extremely necessary."

Colonel Barré said, "If Admiral Keppel and Lord Howe were to be driven from the service of their

* In 1777, James Hall, alias James Aitken, commonly called Jack the Painter, set fire to Portsmouth Dock-yard. He was hanged in chains on a gallows sixty feet high.

country by such machinations and court intrigues, his (Lord North's) and the noble Earl's heads would be staked on the event." Barré was called to order, but he grew only the more violent, and compared "the Ministers to a knot of midnight conspirators, plotting their country's ruin, and proscribing the lives, fortunes, and reputation of every man who was likely to stand in the way of the accomplishment of their deep-laid, but weak and nefarious system."

On the 19th of April, Mr. Fox moved for the removal of Lord Sandwich from the Admiralty. "How was it possible," said Mr. Fox, "for any man of honour or spirit to serve with any safety to his person or character under such men, whose whole conduct was fraught with oppression and malice? The consequences of their misconduct were already felt in some instances: Lord Howe and Admiral Keppel were driven from the service; the whole body of sea officers were discontented; the zeal, spirit, union, and confidence, which was the very life of military enterprise and success in war, was fled, and the whole navy divided and split into factions. How the whole would terminate was more than he could venture to predict; but one thing was pretty evident, that the discontents among those to whom the defence of the country was intrusted, bore a very alarming and ominous appearance."

Mr. Fox was followed by Lord Mulgrave, who defended the conduct of the First Lord of the Admiralty.

Admiral Keppel confessed, though his situation was proud and flattering, to be singled out from among several officers of much superior merit, and the distinction, were it possible to inspire more zeal and activity in him, was such as to have made very strong impressions on any man. He felt how much he stood indebted to his Sovereign and the nation; and it might be readily conceived what a contrasted situation he must have felt himself in, when brought to a trial for his life, as the only reward of his poor services; and, if possible, a still more mortifying consequence was it to find himself driven from the service by necessity; for surely no person would seriously contend for a moment that he ought to have retained his command while his life, his honour, and reputation were, in some measure, within the power of the same men who had successively made attempts on each of them. He was not present at the debate in which an implied charge of mutiny had been made against him and the captains who met to address the King. He was then at Bath, but he understood the charge was made by the same honourable gentleman (Governor Johnstone) who had condemned the rest of his conduct. That, as well as every other assertion and interpretation put on his conduct, was misrepresented. He

did, it was true, meet several officers of rank and reputation; but so far from desiring them not to serve, he pressed them to serve; and, as well as he was able, pointed out to them the impropriety of declining the service at such a critical juncture.

Colonel Barré passed the highest encomiums on Admiral Keppel. He said, that ministers "had inveigled him into the service for certain temporary purposes; and as soon as those purposes were answered, they conspired to effect his ruin. They imagined that they could cover the ruinous state and condition of the navy under that gentleman's fame and reputation as a seaman, and his popularity as an honest, independent man. When they had secured that point, they instantly began to plot his destruction." He then spoke in praise of Lord Howe, and "affirmed that their (Keppel and Howe's) great abilities, their integrity, and their known independent spirit, and love for their country, were the true motives for the neglect and indifference shewn to one, and the persecution and coldness shewn to the other. Besides all their great and good qualities, they possessed a species of professional popularity among their brother officers—more, perhaps, than any two men ever experienced at one time in this country. It was not a popularity that was confined to the officers alone, or even to the very seamen serving under them; it was universal in every quarter of the globe where a Bri-

tish seaman was to be found. 'Little Keppel' and 'Black Dick' were the favourites; and he solemnly protested, that he believed, if the whole British navy was to be united in one squadron, or destined to two services, and that 'Little Keppel' or 'Black Dick' were to command jointly or severally, such was the confidence, affection, and estimation those officers were held in by the whole body of British seamen, that a press upon such an occasion would be rendered in a great measure unnecessary. They were honest men—that was a crime; they were both able and honest—that was a greater crime; they were honest, able, and independent—still worse; but they were honest, able, independent, and popular—and that was the greatest crime of all."

Captain Walsingham, although a supporter of Government, declared "that he knew the honourable Admiral had particularly exerted his best endeavours, and had pressed his advice upon every officer of rank to serve, enforcing it with the most urgent and well-adapted motives for effecting the purposes of general union and satisfaction."

On the 31st of March, the Duke of Richmond, in the House of Lords, moved that Sir Hugh Palliser should not be tried by a court-martial, "without some specific charge being previously exhibited against him."

In the course of the debate, Mr. Jackson, the

Judge-Advocate, was examined at the bar of the House. He was asked why he had not, according to order, delivered in a list of the witnesses summoned on the trial. He replied—

"The same papers had been delivered upon motion to the House of Commons without the list. He did not withhold it from any private reason, nor was he instructed to withhold it; he had brought it in his pocket, lest it might be called for, and then held it in his hand."

Q. "Had the witness any other reason for withholding it?"

A. "Yes; a point of delicacy."

Q. "What was it?"

A. "He did not think it proper to publish the names of the witnesses before the trial; he had acted in the same manner in regard to Admiral Keppel, for when Sir Hugh Palliser, on that occasion, called upon him for a list of the witnesses which Mr. Keppel meant to call to his defence, he declined it from motives of delicacy; *the consequence of which was, a mutual interchange of lists between the Admiral and Vice-Admiral.*"

In Admiral Keppel's edition of Almon's Parliamentary Debates, the words in italics are underlined, and the following note, in his own handwriting—"*Not true.*"*

* In "Keppel's Trial, published by Authority," is the following letter:—

ADMIRAL KEPPEL TO GEORGE JACKSON, ESQ., JUDGE-ADVOCATE.

"Portsmouth, 6th Jan., 1779.

"SIR,—In answer to your letter, proposing an exchange of lists of witnesses with Sir Hugh Palliser, I have only to remind you of what I said to you this morning, that I was determined to avoid any degree of intercourse with that gentleman. I therefore beg to decline saying anything on the subject.

"I am, Sir, &c. "A. KEPPEL."

The following is an extract from a letter, dated April 24th, 1779, from Mr. Hans Stanley* to Lord Buckinghamshire. Mr. Stanley was a supporter of Government, and a defender of Sir Hugh Palliser in parliament.

"Indeed I think our ministers have added, very unnecessarily, to our difficulties and their own, of which the mode of Admiral Keppel's trial is no very trifling instance; for though, I allow, it could not have been avoided, the precipitation with which the order was given, without the least previous communication to the party, has occasioned many disagreeable consequences to the service, though I think even these are gradually decreasing. Sir Hugh Palliser's conduct is not at all more intelligible to us who are upon the spot, than to your Excellency, and as far as I understand the proceedings of the court-martial, they appear to bear hard upon him. Perhaps he acted from a contemporaneous disapprobation of his Admiral's manœuvres, both in the action and preceding it, being of opinion that he should have borne down to the Blue squadron, instead of calling them to be in his wake; but I need not say, this opinion, true or false, is no excuse for disobedience to signals."†

* Grandson of the eminent physician and naturalist, Sir Hans Sloane.

† Sir Robert Heron's MSS.

It is not surprising that Mr. Stanley should endeavour to account in some manner for his friend Sir Hugh Palliser's extraordinary conduct; but he was not much of a sailor, or he would have known that Keppel being to leeward, could not "have borne down to the Blue squadron," even if it had been proper for an Admiral to abandon his own manœuvres for those of a subordinate officer; while Palliser, being to windward, could and ought to have borne down into the wake of his superior.

Sir Hugh Palliser's trial commenced at Portsmouth on board the Sandwich, on the 12th of April. Twenty days were spent in examining witnesses, and three in debating upon the sentence, during which time it is said, the members of the Court were sometimes so loud in dispute, "that the people were obliged to be turned off the deck of the Sandwich to prevent their overhearing it."*

The resolution of the Court was—"That Sir Hugh Palliser's conduct and behaviour on the 27th and 28th of July, were in many respects highly exemplary and meritorious; at the same time, they cannot help thinking it was incumbent on him to have made known to his Commander-in-chief the disabled state of the Formidable, which he might have done by the Fox, at the time she joined him,

* Considerations on Naval Discipline, p. 186.

or by other means. Notwithstanding his omission in that particular, the Court are of opinion he is not in any other respect chargeable with misconduct or misbehaviour on the days afore-mentioned, and therefore they acquit him, and he is hereby acquitted accordingly."

While this trial was in progress, a motion was made by Lord Bristol in the House of Lords, to remove Lord Sandwich from the Admiralty Board. In introducing it, Lord Bristol recapitulated the treatment which Keppel had received from Lord Sandwich, from the moment he was called upon to serve, till the time he struck his flag, in April. In the strongest language he condemned the conduct of the Admiralty, pointed out the deficiency of naval stores, and the deplorable state to which the navy was reduced by the mal-administration of the Admiralty.

Lord Sandwich replied at great length. "The noble Earl," he said, had condemned in very severe terms, the sending out Mr. Keppel in June, with twenty ships, when he knew, or ought to have known, that there was a much superior force ready for sea in Brest water; he did not know, nor could have known, any such thing, because he firmly believed that Mr. Keppel was fully equal to the French fleet when he sailed, and *when he returned;**

* The several passages of Lord Sandwich's speech given in italics, have been underlined by Keppel in his copy of "Almon's Debates."

yet as the Admiral imagined he was not, he thought he acted very properly and prudently in returning into port. His instructions were discretionary; *yet Lord Hawke*, upon similar orders, acted in a different manner: his instructions were to cruise fourteen days off Brest with an inferior force; he outstayed his time, and on his return gave for answer, that he did not regard a small superiority."

To Lord Sandwich's assertion, that "he firmly believed that Mr. Keppel was fully equal to the French fleet, when he sailed, and when he returned," Admiral Keppel makes the following note:—"Notoriously untrue; and in confirmation of which the French were actually at sea with thirty-two or thirty-three ships of the line on the 8th of July." With respect to the latter remark, Keppel observes, "The remark respecting Lord Hawke, *false*. The French at that time were only fitting."

Lord Sandwich, in the course of his speech, "took notice that Lord Bristol had said, that the French fleet, after the action of the 27th, were at sea ten days before us, which was to him a mathematical demonstration that we were more beaten than they; and he confessed, *when he went down to Plymouth*, after the return of the western squadron, he was astonished at the damage the fleet had received, nor could he have credited it, had he not seen it himself."

Keppel, in his copy of "Almon's Debates,"

here remarks, "Lord Sandwich did *not* come to Plymouth." A month before this, Lord Sandwich had stated in the House, that "he offered to go down to Plymouth, but that Admiral Keppel recommended him to stay at the Board, where his presence would be more wanted."

Lord Sandwich said, "much stress had been laid upon the delay of the refit of the western squadron, after its return into port, subsequent to the engagement of the 7th of July; but, my Lords, *I contend it was not the want of naval stores that occasioned the delay, but, as I said before, our fleet was so beaten, and suffered so much more than the French.*"

Opposite the passage in italics, which was underlined by Keppel, he has written, "*Impudent assertion!*"

Lord Lyttelton* asked, "Did the noble Earl (Sandwich) recollect that he had himself declared Mr. Keppel's orders were to return, if he discovered the French fleet to be apparently superior? Either

* This was the Lord Lyttelton who, three days before his death, asserted that he had seen a ghost, which not only warned him of his approaching end, but of the exact time of his death. Unfortunately for the lovers of the supernatural, it is pretty well ascertained that he took poison. Sir Walter Scott says, "It was, no doubt, singular that a man, who meditated his exit from the world, should have chosen to play such tricks upon his friends; but it is more credible that a whimsical man should do so wild a thing, than that a messenger should be sent from the dead to tell a libertine at what precise hour he should expire."—Scott's Demonology and Witchcraft.

Admiral Keppel was to blame for returning, or those that sent him out with a fleet inferior to that of France. He had heard Admiral Keppel in another assembly avow that he gave up his feelings, and the pride of his heart, to the painful sense of the duty he owed his country. The expression was a strong indication of the conflict in the Admiral's mind; and while it did him honour, made every man who heard him feel for the dilemma in which Mr. Keppel was at that time involved, made the pulses of their heart beat quick, with the glow of applause that they felt for his conduct, and made them execrate those who had put a commander of distinguished reputation and ability to the difficulty of either risking the safety of his country, or of doing injury to his own feelings, both as a man, an officer, and a citizen."

The encouragement given by the Government to insubordination produced its natural results. Frequent mutinies broke out among the men of war in the Channel, and some of the most distinguished officers of the navy retired from the service in disgust.

Upon Admiral Keppel's resignation, the command of the fleet was offered to nearly every officer fit for active service; but one and all declined. It

was at length accepted by Sir Charles Hardy, in his time a very respectable officer, but who was now quite unequal to so arduous and responsible a trust.

While Great Britain was in this unfit state to encounter an enemy, Spain formally declared war against her; and D'Orvilliers, having effected a junction with the Spanish fleet, appeared, with sixty-five sail of the line, off Plymouth.

On the 9th of July, a royal proclamation was issued, commanding all horses and cattle to be driven from the coasts. Booms were placed across the entrance to Plymouth harbour, to prevent the approach of the enemy, and orders sent from the Admiralty to sink vessels at the mouth of the harbour.* The greatest consternation prevailed along the whole line of coast, and the greater number of those who had the means, withdrew into the interior, and thereby increased the general panic.†

By the happy accident of an easterly wind, the enemy were prevented from completing the national

* Observations of Admiral Keppel upon the mismanagement of the navy.—Lord Fitzwilliam's MSS.

† As an instance of the general alarm, a congregation, assembled for divine service near the coast, was thrown into the greatest perturbation by a voice exclaiming that the French had landed. Male and female leaped over the pews, and rushed out with loud cries, leaving the church wholly deserted, except by the minister, (for the clerk, too, had fled,) and a few of the military, who remained by command of the General of the district, who happened to be present on the occasion. (The general was Sir R. Sloper, K.B., who related the anecdote to Mr. Yorke, author of the Continuation of "Lives of British Admirals.")

disgrace by a descent upon our shores. Unable to anchor, or to preserve their stations, the combined fleet was driven down the Channel. The wind, soon after, coming round to the west, Sir Charles Hardy profited by the change to run up Channel, when he was chased by the enemy into Spithead.

Sir Charles found the inhabitants in as great alarm at Portsmouth as they had been at Plymouth. Boats were lying ready to cut away the buoys upon the different shoals, and the leading marks to direct ships between them were pulled.

If the French had actually effected a landing at either port, they would have encountered but few obstacles in their further progress. There was a most disgraceful deficiency of arms and ammunition. "There were," said the Duke of Richmond in the House of Lords, (he was speaking of Plymouth,) "guns and shot, but neither the one nor the other answered; all pieces of what are called small stores were totally wanting; there were neither handspikes to work the guns or give them the necessary direction, nor wadding, rammers, sponges, spring-bottoms—nor in short, any one part of the apparatus fit to meet an enemy." Even flints for muskets were wanting, and there were only thirty-five invalided artillery-men, both old and infirm, to man the batteries, and to work two hundred guns.

The ordnance at Portsmouth was in an equally lamentable state. General Lloyd, who first made known the sailing of the combined fleets, "in conversing with the Governor on his means of defence, found that, by some strange blunder, the cannon balls were too large for the guns, so that, as he used afterwards to say, in joke, it was necessary to send balls by post from Woolwich."*

The following letters were written at the time these events were taking place:—

ADMIRAL KEPPEL TO LORD ROCKINGHAM.

"Bagshot Park, July 18th, 1779.

"My dear Marquis,—My spirits I cannot bring to be merry, till I see some way out of the distressful condition the Ministers have brought this country into. Our fleet is increased, and may be reckoned a fine one. Chance may occasion better from it than I am sure I expect. Want of capacity in the chief commander, want of honour

* General Lloyd, author of "The History of the Seven Years' War," being at Boulogne, and well informed of the proceedings of the French, embarked on board a neutral ship, and landed at Portsmouth. On landing, he immediately proceeded to the house of the Governor. It was Sunday—the Governor was at church. He desired he might be immediately sent for, which was done. General Lloyd, who was known to him, accosted him rather abruptly: "What have you to do at church? Have you a mind to have the church knocked about your ears? Don't you know that a French and Spanish fleet, of nearly sixty sail of the line, is at sea, and that an invasion of England is contemplated?"—(Memoirs of the Count de Dumas.)—Note of the Translator, p. 14, vol. i.

and honesty in the first Lord of the Admiralty, and want of opinion and confidence in the captains to their chief, form a melancholy picture. I am told by judges, that an army well disposed, and under able Generals, may do well; but is it so appointed? I understand the fleet is at sea, perhaps at this moment bungling into action. I hear our gracious master has no doubt of its being victorious.

"Lady Rockingham has reason to complain of the heat—it is excessive; it is even too much for me, but I hope her ladyship does not over suffer by it. Every hour will bring news, as the wind blows from the S.W. quarter.

"I hope you are quite well.

"Believe me, most truly, &c.

"A. KEPPEL."

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

"Bagshot, Thursday.

"MY DEAR MARQUIS,—I send this per coach, not from the particulars it contains, but its getting to you a day sooner than by the course of the post. My yesterday's letters from town and the fleet brought me little but what you must be in possession of. Governor Johnstone has informed the Admiralty that he had looked into all the ports upon the coast of France opposite to the English coast, and saw no collection of vessels that could

lead him to imagine an invasion of England was intended. The officers in Sir Charles Hardy's fleet suppose the Cadiz fleet were endeavouring the junction, but do not guess where the enemy's fleet is. Sir Charles Hardy's fleet has never been further out than between the Lizard and Ushant. The Leeward Island convoy got safe, without being covered by Sir Charles. It is to be hoped that the Jamaica convoy will be as lucky; for, sure it is, if they are now near, our fleet is also much nearer, and not in a situation to protect the trade, except from privateers within the channel. Mons. D'Orvilliers must be intent upon junction, or would never have suffered our trade to come in without molestation. He is losing much time, if the joining the whole of the Spanish fleet is not his object. Most probably when they are joined they will support a landing in Ireland; but when I say this I don't yet know in what port they are forming and collecting transports, equal to such a necessarily large embarkation. They may be threatening in Europe, whilst they are taking from us most of our West India Islands. Can it be possible that the city continue with patience and resignation to hear of constant losses and dishonour! St. Vincent taken, probably the Granadas, and if, after their losses, D'Estaing should defeat Byron, (which I, however, cannot believe,) many more of our West

India Islands must fall. D'Estaing, when joined by La Motte Piquet, will be twenty or twenty-one ships of the line—Byron, twenty-one; so that the force seems equal. D'Estaing will, nevertheless, avoid a decisive action—taking now and then a sugar-ship will answer his purpose better. I conclude poor Byron will be roundly abused by the runners of Ministers.

Has your Lordship any account of the French having sent eight line of battle ships to the East Indies? I understand one French ship of seventy-four guns has got into the Cape of Good Hope, after a most particularly severe gale of wind. This ship parted from seven others. We seem to have contentedly allowed of the French sending squadrons to all parts of the world with indifference. La Motte Piquet first sailed from Brest, and next from the Bay, unwatched or unattacked; Mons. D'Orvilliers from Brest, with the same neglect; and yet Lord Sandwich goes with impudence before his Sovereign, and the town is quiet upon every neglect, though disgrace has followed it.

"My respects attend Lady Rockingham. A good journey to your Lordship.

"I am, most truly,

"Your sincere humble servant,

"A. KEPPEL."

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

"Audley-square, August 17th, 1779.

"My dear Marquis,—I was not able to get to London on Saturday last before the hour that Lady Rockingham set off, which I very much grieved at. I am induced to write you this note that you may be early and authentically informed of the news of this day. The enemy's fleet is in the English Channel; the officer arrived at Lord Sandwich's late last night; neither his name nor mine must be mentioned, lest it does the officer harm, being no other than our friend Sir Jacob Wheate, First Lieutenant of the Marlborough, of seventy-four guns, which, in her way to join Sir Charles Hardy's fleet, (supposed to be cruising ten leagues to the westward of Scilly,) discovered a large fleet, consisting of between sixty and seventy sail, which they concluded, at first sight, to have been Sir Charles Hardy, and, under that belief, stood so very near to a part of them, that if they had not sailed well upon retreating, might have been brought to action by the nearest ship, of seventy-four guns, which Sir Jacob imagined to have been a Spaniard by her build, but, she never having shewn her ensign, he is not positive. This fleet was between Scilly and Ushant, mid-channel, rather to the eastward of Scilly, and westward of Ushant. If Sir Charles

Hardy is really only ten leagues to the westward of Scilly, I imagine that the two fleets, when the Marlborough first saw them, could not be above twelve or fourteen leagues asunder; and, if in search of each other, must, before the time I am writing, be in sight. The Marlborough, after the enemy left off chasing her, sent a man-of-war sloop into port, that landed Sir Jacob at Plymouth.

"Sir Charles Hardy's fleet was, in force, thirty-five ships of the line, and one of fifty guns. The Marlborough, of 54; the Ramillies, of 74; the Isis, of 50; the Jupiter, of 50; at sea, endeavouring a junction, the Ardent, of 64 guns, from Portsmouth, and perhaps the Buffalo, of 60 guns: reckoning good fortune to permit of the junction, the fleet will be thirty-nine of the line, and three ships of 50 guns; but if Sir Charles is with his fleet a little to the westward, and the enemy continue where they have been seen, they are between him and the ships endeavouring to join him. If the enemy is only Mons. D'Orvilliers, and six or eight Spaniards, I don't think he will fight Hardy, but will get into Brest if he can, and recruit his ships and men. If he has thirty of the Spaniards with him, he is most certainly in search of Hardy, and we must expect news from day to day. If D'Orvilliers is an able cruiser, and has with him good sailing ships, he

may pick up some of our single ships looking for Hardy.

"Captain Prescot, in a small frigate, with *cash* to pay the troops at Quebec, and ten sail of ships with stores for that place, has just sailed, and must go very near to the enemy. I wish him safe for very many reasons.

"I am this moment going to dinner at Greenwich, and your porter charges himself with this. Respects to the Marchioness, and believe me, ever,

"Most truly yours,

"A. KEPPEL."

"Tuesday morning, one o'clock, P. M.

"P.S. Your letter found me at Hackwood, and I read the part of it that was intended for the Duke and Duchess of Bolton."

JOHN NESBITT, ESQ., TO LORD ROCKINGHAM.

"17th Aug., 1779.

"MY LORD,—Sir Jacob Wheate, lieutenant of the Marlborough, arrived this morning at the Admiralty, with an account of the French and Spanish ships being in the channel. His ship, (the Isis,) and the 'Southampton, were proceeding to join Sir Charles Hardy, (who is in the bay,) when they unexpectedly fell in with the enemy's fleet, and were near being taken. Sir Jacob went on board the Cor-

morant to bring the intelligence to Government. The ships continued their course to join the grand fleet. The confusion this news has occasioned here is prodigious. I am just informed summonses have been sent to all the admirals in town, except Sir Hugh Palliser, to attend the Admiralty, to give their advice in this emergency. I, however, do not vouch for the authenticity of this report. The combined fleets consisted of sixty-three sail; we have no force to oppose such a number. Inclosed I have the honour of sending your Lordship the copy of a letter from the captain of the Cormorant to a friend of his, which was brought by Sir Jacob Wheate, and will throw some light on this business.

"If anything further occurs, I shall have the honour of writing again. I beg my respects to Lady Rockingham, and that you will believe me,

"My Lord, your Lordship's

"Most obliged and obedient servant,

"JOHN NESBITT."

ADMIRAL KEPPEL TO LORD ROCKINGHAM.

"London, August 20th,* 1779, P.M., ten o'clock.

"MY DEAR LORD,—I have delayed writing to your Lordship to this late hour, in hopes of being

* Misdated; it should have been August 19th.

able to write something more material than I learnt immediately before dinner; but I am no wiser than I was at that time, and therefore, late as you may get this, I trust it to the post. I conclude it will be opened, but as the sentiments I always risk are truly those that I fear no man upon, I never consider that some scoundrel reads my letter before you do.

"Various accounts by expresses, both private and public, came this forenoon from the western coast, varying somewhat in their particulars, but I think they generally agree that the combined fleet of France and Spain are plying off and on before the port of Plymouth, to the number of near one hundred sail. They chased the Isis, of fifty guns, into Plymouth Sound. The Ardent, that was outward bound to join Sir Charles Hardy, has also got safe to Plymouth; and the Stag, with the ships going to Ireland, is likewise in the Sound. How humbling is it to be rejoiced that our men-of-war are luckily got into our own ports in the Channel, and not to view with indignation the cause of our present disgraceful situation!

"*The runners of Government* express satisfaction that the enemies' fleet have brought themselves into so certain a situation of being met by Sir Charles Hardy. He is to destroy the enemy's fleet, *by their opinions*. Sir Charles's own opinion I cannot

send you. Yesterday morning, notwithstanding Sir Jacob Wheate's coming with the account, it was believed by Lord Sandwich and others that the fleet seen by the Marlborough was the English fleet.

"The letters from Plymouth suppose that, of the hundred ships, fifty-six or sixty of them are of the line,—much too large a fleet for an honest citizen not to be alarmed at the knowledge of.

"If the Ramillies is not taken, and the Marlborough has joined the English fleet, Sir Charles will be in force thirty-seven of the line, and one of fifty guns. The wind is still easterly, and blows fresh, which does not promise the two fleets meeting for some days.

"Sir H— P— visits Lord S—h at the Admiralty, I conclude as a counsellor, in our alarming state. I am told Sir H— was with the K—g last night; but I don't write this to your Lordship as a fact to be depended upon. The town appears quiet, without the alarm that common sense would suppose.

"The Duke of Grafton is in town, on his way to camp. My mind is fully occupied, but I know not what aid or advice is likely to relieve the country from that which threatens, and is so very near—the enemy commanding the Channel! Sir Charles Hardy, I conclude, by this time knows they are within him. He is supposed to be cruising ten leagues to the westward of Scilly.

"I hear no particulars of the French army at or about St. Maloes. They will certainly land if D'Orvilliers can defeat Hardy.

"Sincerely yours,

"A. KEPPEL."

Walpole, in a letter dated Friday, no doubt the same day as that of Keppel's, writes to the Countess of Ailesbury—"I have good reason to believe the Government knows that a great army is ready to embark at St. Maloes, but will not stir till after a sea fight, which we do not know but may be engaged at this moment. Our fleet is allowed to be the finest ever set forth by this country; but it is inferior in number, by seventeen ships, to the united squadron of the Bourbons. France, if successful, means to pour in a vast many thousands on us, and has threatened to burn the capital itself.

"....The moment is singularly awful; yet the vaunts of enemies are rarely executed successfully and ably."

ADMIRAL KEPPEL TO LORD ROCKINGHAM.

"MY DEAR LORD,—I wrote to you last night by the post, and I rather think that I dated my letter the 20th, instead of the 19th. The French and Spanish fleets, by the accounts from Plymouth in the forenoon, were off that port. The talk at St.

James's this day was that the last accounts made them more to the westward. It seems probable that so large a fleet is not able to hold their situation against this strong easterly wind. They have taken the Ardent, of 64 guns, Captain Boteler, in sight of Plymouth, said to have defended herself well; yet the courtiers pretend good spirits. I believe there is an express from General Conway very unpleasing. Captain Elliott is sent down to Portsmouth, as I am told, in order to go over to the French coast, and command the frigates. I am not without my fears that D'Orvilliers has ability to disgrace us in every part near where he is, if Divine Providence does not protect us. I have no more to write you at this moment, but am ever most truly yours,

" A. KEPPEL.

" P.S.—I have still my pain for the safety of the Ramillies. The Jupiter and a large frigate sailed from Plymouth on Tuesday evening; as they knew of the enemies' fleet being on the coast, it is to be hoped they got by them in the night; and if the French &c. are steering to the westward, it must be in consequence of their capture of the Ardent, by which they may have learnt where he (Sir Charles Hardy) is. The Milford has got into Plymouth from Sir Charles Hardy; she run through the enemies' fleet in the night."

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

" Friday, August 20th.

" The French and Spanish fleets, consisting of sixty-three, or, what is said to-day, of sixty-six ships of the line, are still off Plymouth at anchor; and Sir Charles Hardy is—God knows where!

" Reports to-day say that the French will certainly land a number of men at Cawsand Bay, and endeavour to destroy the Dock at Plymouth, but this is uncertain though perhaps very probable, and very practicable. The Ardent, man-of-war, of sixty-four guns, Captain Phipps,* in endeavouring to join Sir Charles Hardy, was attacked by three French frigates, and, after a very smart engagement, five or six men-of-war of the line came up, and took the Ardent.† This being the case, I believe the fleet under Sir Charles Hardy does not consist of more than thirty-five ships of the line. What a woful plight is this country brought into!

" At the levee to-day, I am informed from a noble

* A mistake,—Captain Boteler commanded the Ardent.

† Captain Boteler had orders to join Sir Charles Hardy's fleet, supposed to be cruising in Channel soundings. He had received no intimation that the enemy had put to sea, when he suddenly fell in with a fleet, which made him the private signal. So little idea had he of its being the enemy, that he was occupied in reefing his topsails, when a frigate poured her broadside into him. At once engaged with four of the enemy's frigates, and a powerful force coming up to their support, he was compelled to strike, and for this—he was dismissed the service!

Lord present, that there were very long faces. The camps at Wharley and Coxheath had no orders at three o'clock to march to the West. The reason, as I am informed, is, that they are afraid of a descent nearer the capital; and till they see more of the motions of the enemy, the troops will not venture to stir.

"Would your Lordship believe it?—the stocks are something better to-day. In this very critical time, I shall frequently trouble your Lordship with a few lines, though you may be much better informed what is doing by better hands."

Captain Jervis, who was then serving under Sir Charles Hardy, seems to have been deeply impressed with the shameful position of the British fleet at this period. He thus writes to his sister, Mrs. Ricketts:—

"Foudroyant, South-west of Scilly, 20 leagues,
"August 24th.

"My dear Sister,—A long easterly wind has prevented our getting into the Channel, to measure with the combined fleets, and also caused your not hearing from me in answer to your letter of the 5th. .... What a humiliating state is our country reduced to! and yet those who have caused it, and who have committed the most wicked, flagrant, and recent blunders, are permitted to guide us, I fear, to utter destruction. Not that I have the smallest

doubt of clearing the coast of these proud invaders. But what then?

"I am happy to learn that you did not put in execution your Staffordshire visit, for though I laugh at invasion, you would have been miserable at a distance.

"The first westerly wind will carry us in to the combined fleets. Keep your spirits up about me, whatever reports you may hear; for I, and all around me, have the fullest confidence of success, and of acquiring immortal reputation.

"Give my kind love to the children, and rest assured of the most unbounded affection and regard of your "J. J."

THE EARL OF SHELBURNE* TO ADMIRAL KEPPEL.

"Bowood Park, 22nd July, 1779.

"DEAR ADMIRAL,—The last thing I did before my marriage on Monday, was to read the honour of yours of the 18th. I came here on Tuesday; and upon three days' trial can assure you it answers exceedingly. I therefore advise you, by all means, to take the step. You have never failed to please in every line but one; and, as things stand, I don't

* Lord Shelburne had, a few days before, been married to Lady Louisa Fitzpatrick, daughter of the Earl of Upper Ossory. The issue of this marriage was the present Marquis of Lansdowne.

think that need discourage, as you have already proved it cannot dishonour you.

"Be assured, my dear Admiral, of the unalterable respect and devotion with which I hope ever to remain,

"Your truly affectionate servant,

"SHELBURNE.

"P.S. Lady S. desires many compliments."

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO ADMIRAL KEPPEL.

"Beaconsfield, Nov. 6th, 1779.

"MY DEAR ADMIRAL,—I received a letter from Lord Rockingham. It was dated the 3rd of this month. He wishes that I should communicate it to you. It is written with his usual comprehensive good sense, and on a very just view of the state of this unhappy nation. I should have endeavoured to find some safe method of sending it, if I had not a great probability of being able to indulge myself in the pleasure of paying my respects to you in London, on Wednesday next, or Thursday at furthest. I shall endeavour to be in town as soon as I can. The town, and my house there, will be the more pleasant to me for a piece of furniture I have had since I saw you, and which I owe to your goodness. I shall leave to my son,* who is of a

* Sir Walter Scott says, "Burke was under the strange hallucination that his son, who predeceased him, was a man of greater talents

frame of mind to relish that kind of honour, the satisfaction of knowing that his father was distinguished by the partiality of one of those who are the marked men of all story, by being the glory and the reproach of the times they live in, and whose services and merits, by being above recompence, are delivered over to ingratitude. Whenever he sees that picture, he will remember what Englishmen, and what English seamen were, in the days when name of nation, and when eminence and superiority in that profession were one and the same thing. Indeed, I am perfectly convinced, that 'Englishman' and 'seaman' are names that must live and die together. Perhaps the last honour which the naval soldiery of this nation may be permitted to do themselves and their country, is, the justice they have done to you. This has sealed their reputation. It will be recorded with the rest, when people read of the people who have successively held the empire of the sea.

"I assure you, my dear Sir, that though I possess the portraits of friends highly honoured by me, and

than himself. On the contrary, he had little talent, and no nerve. On moving some resolutions in favour of the Catholics, which were ill received by the House of Commons, young Burke actually ran away, which an Orangeman compared to a cross-reading in the newspapers. 'Yesterday, the Catholic resolutions were moved, &c.—but the pistol, missing fire, the villains ran off!'"—Life of Sir Walter Scott, vol. vii. p. 136.

very dear to me on all accounts, yours stands alone; and I intend that it should so continue, to mark the impression I have received of this most flattering mark of your friendship. I really am as sensible of your goodness as possible.

"I have the honour to be, with the most sincere regard and esteem,

"My dear Sir,

"Your most faithful and obedient humble servant,

"EDM. BURKE."

The picture here mentioned is the one which Burke, in his well-known "Letter to a noble Lord," mentions by way of introducing his panegyric on Keppel. On the death of Burke, it became the property of his widow, who left it to the late Earl Fitzwilliam. It is now at Milton, one of the seats of the present peer.

JOHN LEE, ESQ. TO ADMIRAL KEPPEL.

"Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, 19th Nov., 1779.

"DEAR ADMIRAL,—After having preferred a sort of complaint to you against Sir Joshua Reynolds, for not sending me my picture, it is but just to inform you that I received it yesterday, in fine order, and as I think, and Mrs. Lee thinks, in all respects just such as we wished it to be. I give

you again our thanks for it, and at the same time for your kind present of the miniature to my little girl. The light in which I saw it in your house did not exhibit it to advantage; but the next day, when I came to examine it in full daylight, I was exceedingly struck with it, both as beautifully painted, and as a very exact likeness. Mrs. Lee feels herself highly honoured by this token of attention to her child; and the little one herself, instantly on my giving it her, called to her maid to bring her a very little wine, that she might drink Admiral Keppel's health. I trust your spasms are gone off.

"I am, dear Sir,

"Your faithful and much obliged servant,

"JOHN LEE."

"'The little girl' is still in possession of the miniature, and remembers that one of the chief lessons inculcated by her parents was to love and venerate the name of 'Keppel.'"

Parliament assembled on the 25th of November. The debates turned principally upon the naval transactions of the preceding summer. In the speech from the throne, the King said—"Trusting in the Divine Providence, and in the justice of his cause, he was firmly resolved to prosecute the war with vigour." In the amendment to the address, Lord John Cavendish observed—"Providence was, in-

deed the great ally to whom alone the kingdom owed its preservation—an inferior fleet, a defenceless coast, an exhausted treasury, presented an easy prey to the enemy, but Providence interposed, and the danger blew over."

Lord North complained that "the gentlemen opposite were willing to attribute the protection of our trade solely to Providence, without allowing any merit either to administration or to the commander of the western squadron. He declared that Sir Charles Hardy deserved no less the admiration than the applause of his countrymen. To decline an engagement, *when he knew a reinforcement was just ready to join him*,* and when the enemy was so much his superior in point of number, was the effect of prudence and eminent skill in his profession. Sir Charles Hardy had endeavoured to draw the enemy up the Channel, where our fleet might have engaged with less disadvantage, but the enemy did not think proper to come to an action, or venture far to the eastward."

Admiral Keppel "reprobated with indignation Lord North's assertions, respecting the protection given to our trade by the fleet under the command of Sir Charles Hardy. They were false—they were impositions, he affirmed, in every particular, and he was ready to prove it, if called upon. The language

* Underlined by Keppel, in "Almon's Debates."

of the noble Lord was not the language of a seaman, nor of any person who conversed with seamen. No seaman could bear to listen to it, without giving it the most unreserved and unqualified contradiction. The reasoning, arguments, and assertions of the noble Lord, were those of a landsman; and he made no scruple to say, that that landsman was the Earl of Sandwich. If it was true, in any degree, the honourable Admiral whose name had been mentioned must confess that his forty years' experience had brought him no information, and but little professional knowledge."

"If the enemy had not succeeded in their designs, their failing to effect their purposes could not be attributed to the operations of our fleet. Had M. D'Orvilliers been impeded by it in his approach to Plymouth? The enemy, it was true, had effected no landing there, but was it not equally true that during the time they lay before it, the wind was never sufficiently far to the westward to give them an opportunity to prudently make the attempt; and was not their departure entirely owing to the elements, which forced them out of the Channel to sea? The same wind which was unfavourable to their working up higher in the Channel, when increased, forced them out of it."

"As to the safe arrival of our trade, could our fleet derive any merit from that fortunate circum-

stance, when it was beyond the possibility of a doubt, that the whole of it, returning from the East and West Indies, might have been intercepted by so small a force as two ships of the line? Had not that strong easterly wind operated, by the permission of Providence, in our favour, must not the large transports, which arrived so immediately after the departure of the enemy, have fallen into their hands, to the disgrace of Government and the almost irreparable loss of the nation? What, then, had we to thank but Providence for the salvation of our trade, and the safety of the town, docks, and naval arsenals of Plymouth? Inferior as our fleet must have been to the squadrons of France and Spain united, it was the more incumbent on Ministers to prevent their junction. How came it, then, that our fleet was suffered to remain peaceably in Torbay, while that junction was effecting, while not a single effort was made to defeat so alarming an event taking place? That instance of neglect alone had furnished a sufficient ground, and that of the most positive and direct nature, against Administration, and, unconnected with any other part of their conduct, justified, to the conviction of the meanest or most enlightened understanding, the propriety, nay, the necessity, of agreeing to the amendment proposed by his noble friend. The fate of the empire seemed to turn on the single circumstance of

dividing the naval force of the enemy; yet in that most critical and tremendous moment no active effort was made,—no, not even so much as an attempt. The torpor of the Ministry increased in proportion as our danger augmented, and demanded double, nay, ten times over, their attention and utmost assiduity."

"The noble Lord in the blue ribbon, with his wonted ingenuity, dexterity, and address, had defended the propriety of the flight of a British fleet from an insulting foe, in the sight of our own coasts, for certainly such it was; but if the word was harsh, he would call it a retreat! The ground on which his Lordship justified that new and disgraceful event was, that Sir Charles Hardy returned for a reinforcement—a miserable justification, indeed! What did this expected mighty reinforcement consist of? The Arrogant, one of Sir Edward Hawke's rotten ships; and the Blenheim, whose bottom was so foul that she had been obliged to go into dock to undergo a thorough repair. This was the paltry reinforcement, to obtain which, a British fleet was ordered to run from an enemy offering them battle on their own coasts. For this, the courage of our seamen, and the spirit and professional honour and dignity of our officers, were to be wounded and damped. Even with an inferior fleet, something might have been done; and if nothing had been

gained by it, yet nothing would have been lost. But what, on the other hand, can compensate for the loss of national glory which we have sustained by the disgraceful flight of our fleet?"

"He declared himself totally unacquainted with the orders given to Sir Charles Hardy; he fixed no blame, nor imputed no defect in point of skill, courage, or fidelity to that gentleman. Very possibly that veteran seaman was justified in his conduct, from the tenour of his instructions; but, totally in the dark concerning the honourable Admiral's motive, he was obliged to frame his opinion on appearances; in that point of view, all he could fairly add on the subject was, that he still remained unable to account for Sir Charles's going to sea a second time, under the direction of men who could, who dared to compel him to the necessity, the humiliating and mortifying necessity, of running away. Had he been in the situation Sir Charles Hardy was, instead of taking the command again he would have given Ministers this answer—'I will never run away to oblige you again!'

"To give the full completion to the sottishness and ignorance of Administration," the fleet, he observed, "was kept at sea at this dangerous season of the year, when it run the risk of being dispersed and shattered by storms, and to answer no purpose but that of an empty parade, in the language of the

noble Lord in the blue ribbon, while the enemy had been laid up for some weeks safe in port, preparing perhaps already, with all possible industry and dispatch, for the next campaign.

"Admiral Keppel took a retrospective view of the events of the last campaign with sorrow; and looked forward to the next with doubt, solicitude, suspense, and apprehension, for the consequences which he feared would follow; and as our only means of salvation, he would vote for the removal of those weak or wicked counsellors, who had led us imperceptibly, and by degrees, to our present state of calamity, humiliation, and national distress."

The discredit into which the British navy had fallen, through the incapacity of Lord Sandwich and his coadjutors, was for a time forgotten in the successes of Rodney, who, on the 7th of January of this year (1780), fell in with a fleet of merchant ships, under the convoy of seven men of war, the whole of which he captured. He soon after encountered Don Juan de Langara's squadron, consisting of eleven ships of the line and two frigates, and after an action of ten hours' continuance, succeeded in dispossessing the enemy of seven sail of the line: four of these he carried into Gibraltar, two were wrecked after possession had been taken, and one

blew up in action. For this service he received the thanks of both Houses of Parliament. Keppel was not in the House when the thanks of the Commons were voted, but, coming in shortly afterwards, he "apologized to the House for getting up in a disorderly manner, which he did, to express his sorrow at not having been present when the thanks of the House had been moved to Sir George Brydges Rodney. He did assure the House that, one only instance excepted, and that the House would be kind enough to excuse him for saying, he never felt more sincere satisfaction at the thanks of the House having been voted. Sir George Rodney had rendered his country most important services, services which, he would venture to say, were not more signal in themselves than well performed. He thought it incumbent upon him to give his testimony in that House to the merit of an Admiral, who deserved every honour in the power of his country to bestow."

Upon this, Mr. Marsham* proposed that some high post of honour should be bestowed on Sir George Rodney, and hinted that the vacant office of Lieutenant-general of Marines should be given to Sir George.

This led to a debate, in which Mr. T. Townshend

* The Hon. Charles Marsham, second son of Lord Romney, at this time member for Kent.

complained of Rodney's having been deprived of the governorship of Greenwich Hospital by Lord Sandwich, when he was sent, in 1771, to the West Indies with a command.

Lord North said, "Sir George Rodney had received the thanks of the House, and he thought they were in themselves a very high reward. He endeavoured to prove that Greenwich Hospital was taken from Rodney as a matter of course, and said it was very far from usual that an officer should have the Hospital and a command on a foreign station at the same time."

Admiral Keppel understood, "that in the case of Sir George Rodney it had been offensively taken away. Greenwich, he said, was doubtless a very handsome retirement, and there had been periods of his life in which, though he was conscious he had not merited it, he should have thought himself highly obliged to that Minister who would have given him Greenwich. With regard to the thanks of that House, he did not know what value his friend Rodney might set upon such a vote, but he prized the vote of thanks that he had been honoured with infinitely above all reward or emolument, either the Lieutenant-generalship of Marines, Greenwich, or, in short, any lucrative and honourable appointment in the power of a Minister."

The motion was finally withdrawn.

The want of discipline which prevailed in the navy at this period was not confined to the Channel. Sir George, in a letter to Lady Rodney, says, "I can defy envy, malice, or villany, to tax me with not having done my duty even to the utmost extent; but without a thorough change in our naval affairs, the discipline of our navy will be lost."* And in the dispatch of his engagement off St. Lucia, he says, "It is with concern inexpressible, mixed with indignation, that the duty I owe my Sovereign and my country obliges me to acquaint your Lordships, that during the action with the French fleet, on the 17th instant, and his Majesty's, the British flag was not properly supported." This passage was suppressed in the Gazette, but has since been given to the world by Lieutenant-general Mundy.†

In both Houses of Parliament Rodney's letter, giving an account of the engagement, was called for.

Lord Pembroke, in seconding a motion for "a copy of the late dispatches from Sir George Brydges Rodney," said, "it was indispensably necessary that the public should know the *real* transactions of the 17th of April, and what were the causes of the miscarriage of that disgraceful day." He then read a letter which, he assured the House, was written by as brave an officer as any in the British

* Mundy's Life of Rodney, vol. ii. pp. 229, 230.
† Ibid. vol. ii. p. 306.

navy, and a person of known probity and honour. The substance of the letter was, "that the spirit of Sir Hugh Palliser had gone forth and infected the British fleet; and the service felt all the evils arising from those dissensions which were sown by our *great men at home*. The ships were foul, and out of repair. There was a great scarcity of all kinds of naval stores; many of the ships had suffered greatly in the engagement; several of them were crippled, and therefore rendered useless in a great measure, and there were some which the letter-writer predicted would never again reach England. The letter contained a very warm panegyric on the bravery and conduct of Sir George Rodney, charged several of the Captains with a failure of duty, and represented the Commander-in-chief as being much dissatisfied, not only with the conduct of several of the officers who served under him, but likewise with those who had *deceived* him, relative to the expected state and condition of the squadron, to the command of which he was appointed."

The attention of the nation being thus directed to the discipline of the navy, an inquiry into the causes of the mutiny on board the Thunderer and Invincible was attempted to be instituted in the House of Commons.

Admiral Keppel was unwilling to lay blame upon

any particular person, but he was very sure there must have been a fault somewhere, or the mutiny spoken of would not have happened." Here he was abruptly interrupted by Lord Mulgrave, who said that mutinies might be expected to be more frequent when spoken of in such a manner. Keppel said, "he loved discipline as much as the noble Lord, but always wished to shew lenity when an opportunity offered. There was one instance of it in particular, which he should always recollect with pride. When he was last in command, Sir Robert Harland informed him of a mutiny—and what did he do? He did not order any severity to be used—he knew that was the last thing to be resorted to; but he told Sir Robert Harland to go back to the men, and tell them he would not suffer him or any one else to do them an injury, and desired they would make him acquainted with the nature of their complaint. The method he took had the desired effect: the mutiny subsided, and the men returned to their duty. His lenity had procured this; whereas, had he proceeded to extremities, a great deal of blood must have been shed."

It was this spirit of humanity and of love for the sailor, which so characterized Keppel, that induced him strongly to oppose a bill that was brought into Parliament for the better manning of the navy. Several clauses of this bill were so

oppressive, that nothing but the exigency of the times could for a moment palliate its adoption.

When the House went into committee, Keppel rose to oppose the bill; "because, if passed into a law, it would," he said, "render the condition of the seaman little better than that of the galley-slave. He had spent his whole life in the naval service, and, of course, had constant opportunities of knowing the uncommon hardships the seamen were necessarily compelled to undergo. He would not, therefore, have that state rendered still more discouraging, irksome, and intolerable, by means no less destructive to the well-being of the navy, and the advancement of the service, than repugnant to the constitution and the protection of the subject; he meant those persons who were not seamen, but were pointed out as proper objects of punishment by the bill. He liked the title of the bill extremely well, because it imported regulations which, if judiciously made and properly carried into execution, might prove extremely beneficial to the service—he meant the disposition of seamen to run into the merchants' service, on account of the high wages; but the present bill was not a bill of regulation and prevention, but was fraught with manifest oppression and injustice, and, considered in every possible light he was able to consider it, was big with mischief."

CHAPTER IX.

CORRESPONDENCE — GENERAL ELECTION — PARLIAMENTARY PROCEEDINGS.

Letters—Keppel to Lord Rockingham—Dissensions in the French and Spanish fleets—Dissolution of Parliament—Keppel loses his election for Windsor—Is returned for Surrey—Letters—Mr. Burke, the Earl of Shelburne, and Mr. Lee, to Keppel—Keppel to Lord Rockingham—Picture of Washington—The Order of the Cincinnati—Parliamentary proceedings—Letters—Admiral Keppel to Commodore Johnstone—The Commodore's reply—Debates in Parliament — Keppel recommends the adoption of copper bottoms to ships of war, and the establishment of marines as a distinct corps—Advocates the interests of the sailors—A better treatment of the American prisoners.

1780.

Prior to the prorogation of Parliament, Lord North finding the Administration daily growing more unpopular, determined to resign, and was only prevented by the personal solicitation of the King. Indeed, in the previous November, he had been so anxious to take this step, that the King authorized Lord Thurlow to attempt a coalition with the Whigs, but, among other conditions, stipulated that those who joined the Ministry

should engage "to prosecute the present unjust and unprovoked war in all its branches with the utmost vigour." In July, however, "something like a direct proposal" was made *to*, and not *from*, Opposition, as stated by Hughes.* The negotiation was opened with Lord Rockingham by Lord North. That it was not conducted in a manner satisfactory to the Whig party, appears by the following letter:

ADMIRAL KEPPEL TO LORD ROCKINGHAM.

"Bagshot, Sunday evening, July 9, 1780.

"My dear Lord,—Your servant has just brought me the honour of your letter of this day from Wimbledon. The subject is no matter of surprise or disappointment to the idea I had formed, and my temper, therefore, is not in the least moved by it: I trust yours will not be; although there has been so little meant on the part of the Court, and so much openness and fairness on your part, that you have much to complain of. At the same time that I say this, I do not mean that you should use reproach upon the occasion. I think silence and quiet contempt the most advisable. The frequent experience you have had of the little dirty acts of the Court should in future fix *a rule for your guidance*:—upon no account ever again to listen to offers

* Hughes's History of England, vol. iii. p. 20.

and negotiations through *any* person about the King's person. If his Majesty is in earnest at any time in wishing to form an honest and good Government for the happiness of his people, and his thoughts for that purpose should fall upon your Lordship, you will judge best how prudent and safe it may be for you to undertake the office. But if your feeling for your country's distresses weighs with you to risk yourself, (for much risk you will run,) I beseech your Lordship to resolve, in your coolest moments, never again to encourage or make other reply than your obedience to attend his Majesty *in person*, there and then to deliver your thoughts upon the state of the country, and state how far you think you, with your friends, can or cannot be useful. I think I need not dwell further upon this point, though I may observe upon what was hinted with regard to the Duke of Richmond's appearing at Court. It seems to me the most weak and paltry trick that ever was attempted, and fit only for the person whose mind could suggest it. I do not wonder at the wish in the Court to place Mr. Fox first in a lucrative office, and not at once as a Minister in the Cabinet. This answer to the point concerning the Duke of Richmond and Mr. Fox is, that your lordship was to begin as an *aid*, without the support of your own friends, and discovers the whole to be very like to what you have had experience of more

than once. I should have been just as little pleased with what has passed, if it had been my fate to have been placed among those of our friends who were civilly spoken of. Am I to think Lord North a rogue or a fool, to attempt opening a negotiation with your lordship, upon such ideas as you have now learnt to be the King's? I will not trouble you with more at present. Not one word that I have wrote is in warmth, or wanting temper. The country's misfortunes I must, however, lament.

"Luck has been much in favour of our operations by sea, though no advantage has been gained from the different events and actions. Commodore Johnstone has done well to apprise Admiral Rodney of the Spanish fleet's sailing from Cadiz; but I think De Guichen has so managed that Rodney will be more than fortunate if he falls in with the Spaniards. Should he be so lucky, and do it without falling to leeward of the islands, it may prove of every importance; but I am not sanguine enough to expect it. Should Admiral Rodney be carried in pursuit or search of the Spanish fleet to leeward of the islands, I think it is more than probable De Guichen will do as D'Estaing did last year — attack, and take some islands to windward.

"His Majesty's speech will be much commented upon in the country, but not by me.

"I have much company here now, but I certainly shall see you before you go into the North; or whenever it can be material for you to see me, I will run from my company. I hope your rest at Wimbledon will soon set you to rights. I am getting my hay in; that done, the ground requires much rain, and more than the clouds promise.

"I beg my respects to Lady Rockingham. I am now at the bottom of my paper, and have only to repeat what I said in a former letter—that your conduct must be applauded by all well-thinking and honest men.

"I am ever most sincerely yours,

"A. KEPPEL."

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

"(Elden) Monday evening, July 23, 1780.

"DEAR MARQUIS,—Many thanks to your Lordship for the venison, and the information you give me of your intention of being in town on Tuesday evening or Wednesday morning. I will myself certainly be in town on Tuesday afternoon, and dine with your Lordship and the Marchioness, if not inconvenient to you, either on Wednesday or Thursday, whichever of those two days you are most at liberty. I would accept of the Friday, as you proposed, if General Hodgson and several

others had not fixed upon that day to dine at Bagshot, which will oblige me to leave London very early on Friday morning. You will be so good as to contrive to let me know at my house in Audley-square, as soon as you can, respecting the day, whether it is Wednesday or Thursday, that I may reserve myself unengaged for that day. Charles Fox dined here yesterday, and left me this morning. He brought me the news which was in town from Sir George Rodney, and exactly as you give it. If the Spaniards separate from the French without assisting them in the reduction of the Windward Islands, their joining at all seems void of common sense: it is only losing time, giving information of themselves, and affording leisure to the English forces at Jamaica to prepare for their reception. Besides, should they do so, Admiral Rodney and General Vaughan, knowing that island to be their single object, may so contrive as to send a couple of thousand men to Jamaica, and, though perhaps not immediately, to follow with the fleet: the French alone might otherwise avail themselves of his (Rodney's) absence, and take the weakest of our islands without the Spaniards' aid. Troops may be landed at Jamaica, although the attack of it was begun; but such an attempt must be kept so secret as to be its own discoverer.

"I cannot bring myself to believe the French and

Spaniards will separate immediately, and leave a certainty for an uncertainty. They may with their present strength, if they act speedily, take Antigua, St. Kitt's, Mounserrat, and the little adjacent islands, in the operation of fifteen days. They may then separate, garrison Porto Rica, and proceed either to reinforce their own places, or do both that, and cruise to intercept the latter Jamaica convoy. The safety of Jamaica seems, from what I have observed, and by the season, (after July,) to be against the enemy's acting so unembarrassed. On the contrary, to windward everything is in their favour; and if they are quiet in taking Antigua, I am (with my present ideas) at a loss to imagine how it will be possible for Sir George to victual or store his fleet. The magazines are chiefly, if not all, at Antigua. I enclose you a note, with remarks relative to our force and the enemy's, that may act together or separately. Should the enemy delay their enterprise, Sir George will probably make his force twenty-nine or thirty-one; if their object was to attack his fleet so late as the 15th or 20th of July. But if the necessity of his risking his whole force should be determined as absolutely necessary, upon the enemy's first attempt upon Antigua, he will not, by the 1st of July, be in condition to do it with more than twenty-two ships. An additional object to the enemy's haste and acting to windward will be, in the

moment that is described as their arrival, (the 19th of June,) the securing the whole of the first crops of sugar, most probably just loaded on board the trading ships for departure. Barbadoes and St. Lucia, for a short time, may be safe, as they are to windward; but if the islands before named fall, I think it follows that they (Barbadoes and St. Lucia), if not at once, must very soon fall also; and very probably, as the French will be masters of the sea, Jamaica will in time be reduced. The conquest of St. Carolina will little deter the Americans, when they know but half that may have happened in the West Indies. Much good may his Majesty expect from his Ministers! They deserve every mark of their country's resentment. I am really so much alarmed at the melancholy prospect, that I am almost left without the smallest remedy. If ever you look at my paper of January, 1778, (I believe it is,) remarking the probable issue of the war then beginning, I fancy it expresses the fears of what is now the actual prospect. I write this without method; but as my ideas crowd upon me, I hope you will be able to collect my meaning.

"Respects to Lady Rockingham; and believe me ever most truly yours,

"A. KEPPEL."

It presently appeared that Keppel's doubts of the co-operation of the French and Spaniards were well

founded. Rodney wrote to the Admiralty from St. Christopher's—"On my arrival here, I received secret intelligence (which has never deceived me) of the violent disagreements between the Spanish and French admirals; that the Spaniards absolutely refused to co-operate with them in any enterprise whatever, openly declaring their Court had been deceived, and that they had been made to believe, before they left Spain, that they would find, on their arrival in the West Indies, the French in possession of all the Caribbee Islands. The rancour between the two nations, by all accounts, and by many intercepted letters, was fatal to several officers; and the sickness and mortality in both fleets had reduced them very much."*

Even when joined by Commodore Walsingham's squadron, Rodney still found his force so inferior to that of the enemy, that he could only act on the defensive, and consequently was unable to seek an engagement. Owing to the pestilential disorder among the Spanish forces and the dissension in the combined fleet, nothing material was attempted before the belligerent powers found themselves obliged to quit the Indian seas, in order to avoid the fury of the hurricane months.

On the dissolution of Parliament, September 1st,

* Mundy's Life of Rodney, vol. ii. pp. 364, 365.

1780, Admiral Keppel, who had represented Windsor since 1761, repaired to the electors of that borough to solicit a renewal of their suffrages. But since he last appeared before them, he had become such an object of dislike to both the Court and the Government, that their joint influence was exerted against his return. Erskine, in a pamphlet which he wrote at this time under the signature of "A Freeholder," affirms, that "the highest power of Government, not contented with having, in defiance of the unanimous suffrages of the fleet and of both Houses of Parliament, deprived the nation of his (Keppel's) abilities in his profession, made itself a party to rob it likewise of his zeal and honesty in the senate. That the influence, splendour, and advantages of the royal residence (it is to be hoped and believed without the knowledge of the royal person) were prostituted to dazzle and to seduce his humble, and, till then, grateful constitutents. The avowed servants of the crown, quartered in the first palace in the world, sleeping in stables and in garrets, to acquire by fraud, at the price of common decency and justice, the high privilege of preferring a little obscure country squire, who had never represented Windsor or any other place before, to a man of the Admiral's high birth and eminent public character, who had served it with fidelity for more than twenty years. To the eternal

disgrace of Windsor, such little arts prevailed; yet even this spurious majority amounted to but sixteen."

In his speech from the hustings, Keppel, after alluding to a report that the King had personally taken a part in the proceedings against him, said— "*This cannot be true. It* OUGHT *not to be believed. It* MUST *not be believed.*"

As soon as the result of the contest at Windsor became known, a large body of the freeholders of Surrey, sent a deputation to request the Admiral would allow himself to be put in nomination for their county; the next day, the electors of Suffolk proposed to return him to Parliament free of expense. As he had already accepted the Surrey invitation, he declined the latter proposal. Sir Joseph Mawbey was the other Whig candidate, but he would not coalesce with Keppel. The Government sent down the Hon. Thomas Onslow to oppose both.

The letter here given, written 26th September, will shew the state of the canvass:—

ADMIRAL KEPPEL TO LORD ROCKINGHAM.

"DEAR LORD ROCKINGHAM,—I have just got a quiet moment, which I use to inform you what the appearance is of the business I am embarked in. To this hour, I have been hurried beyond any trial I ever had, but am yet well in health, which I flatter

myself may last till the conclusion of the poll at Guildford.

" Government moves heaven and earth. Onslow is well supplied with money, and I think will try it to the end; he is supported by every creature of the Court, by his natural connexions, by Sir Fletcher Norton's interest, by your friends Lord Winterton and Sir George Howard, and by many other such like. All Guildford will be for Onslow, and his canvass, I understand, promises his share in the small parishes. Farnham, a large district, not favourable to him, as it was to Mr. Norton at the last contest. Sir Joseph Mawbey has acted the part of an obstinate blockhead in not joining his name with mine; but when I say this, there can be no doubt of his good wishes towards me. The gentlemen, my friends, numerous they are, seem to me, with very little exception, to have worked hard and effectually in their canvassing. Sir Robert Clayton's interest—very powerful, and very few refusals. Of the great towns, which are the only ones I have particularly shewn myself in, is, first, Reigate, four in five favourable to me. Lord Newhaven, near—don't vote himself, but friendly. Croydon, four in five favourable; Dorking, about four in six favourable; Epsom, rather doubtful; Guildford, much against me; Godalming, four in six favourable; Farnham, it is hoped, may be near, if not quite, equal; Kingston, four in six favourable;

Richmond, rather a majority for me. Lord Spencer, Lord Besborough, of course, much for me; Lord King, Lord Suffolk, Lord Tankerville, Lord Radnor, much so. I cannot state how the different scattered parts are disposed, but it is understood not against, if not for. The Borough, Redriffe, Camberwell, and Westminster, most favourable. Blackheath, supposed against me. The Archbishop of Canterbury, much against me. Lord Middleton very active and useful; Sir William Meredith, most industriously useful.

"I do really think, upon the whole, if I am not much deceived, I shall conquer. My friends, I know, will rejoice; but, on the contrary, should I be beat, I must confess I should feel the disappointment most thoroughly. I have not time to say more than to beg my respects to Lady Rockingham, and that you will believe me,

"Ever yours,

"A. KEPPEL."

Just setting off for Guildford, September 26th. Election to-morrow."

The result of the first day's poll gave Keppel a majority of 519 over Mr. Onslow; and the next day, at the close of the poll, the numbers were—

Sir Joseph Mawbey	2419
Admiral Keppel	2179
Mr. Onslow	1506

The following letters relate to the result of the election :—

MR. BURKE TO ADMIRAL KEPPEL.

"Beaconsfield, September 29, 1780.

"My dear Sir,—Permit me to make one in the congratulations on this happy day. It is, indeed, a great and a happy day upon many accounts. The people of England have risen in my estimation. It is a great event for *them;* because it is a substantial encouragement to all those who in future shall, like you, serve them with ability, courage, and honour, without regard to cabal and the little politics of a Court. If I were not conscious to myself of my personal affection and attachment to you, I might very well imagine that the whole subject of my joy was for the public. But, if the public had no share at all in our present triumph, it would be a pleasant thing for all those who have right feelings, to know that a great body of the people knew how to distinguish the most amiable man in society, as well as the greatest commander that ever distinguished our navy.

"I have the honour to be, with the sincerest congratulations of Mrs. Burke and my brother,

"My dear Sir,

"Your most affectionate friend,

"And faithful humble servant,

"Edm. Burke."

THE EARL OF SHELBURNE TO ADMIRAL KEPPEL.

"Bowood Park, 5th October, 1780.

"DEAR ADMIRAL,—I am much obliged by the honour of your letter, as it gives me an opportunity of congratulating you on what we have already congratulated each other with warmness. The county of Surrey has given convincing proof that no want of public spirit lies with the people, but, so far as it exists, is to be looked for elsewhere.

"Your goodness to this House will make you glad to hear that no privateer has been cruising in our seas: I have no friend disappointed in regard to Parliament except Mr. Popham, who trusted to Lord North's honour in a negotiation of neutrality about Taunton, and was deceived. I never imagined Alderman Townsend would come in for London, as he has so repeatedly declared to the city his aversion to it.

"Lady Shelburne returns you many thanks for your remembrance of herself and her son. Such is the quiet of our life, that he plays a very considerable *rôle* in it, and, when he does speak, I am sure will be proud to declare his respect for Admiral Keppel.

"I am, with unalterable esteem,

"Dear Admiral,

"Your faithful and most obedient servant,

"SHELBURNE.

"P.S.—I take Colonel Barré to be at Margate, but I am not certain."

ADMIRAL KEPPEL TO LORD ROCKINGHAM.

"London, Oct. 11th, 1780.

"My dear Lord Rockingham,—I promised myself, before I left London, I would write your Lordship a long letter; but, though I am about setting off for Suffolk, I fear I shall not be able to convey to you all that I wish you to know.

"The close of my Surrey business, as far as it concerned the honourable and generous freeholders of the county, you have had, either in my letter to your Lordship or that to my lady. I forgot to mention to Lady Rockingham the fear I had that canvassing the Miss Pelhams for their interest might be embarrassing to them, and, for that reason, did not trouble them; at Guildford, I understood their influence was given to Mr. Onslow and myself. If I am open to censure, Lady Rockingham, I trust, will make my peace. I have not myself ventured upon an explanation.

"The Surrey voters that came from Windsor, and about that place, returned with the utmost speed to announce my victory to the inhabitants of Windsor. The cannon were soon firing, and the bells ringing: and almost every house was lighted. I have been told that his Majesty had said, 'It

would possibly be 'a busy night,' and had recommended a sergeant and twelve privates, with loaded arms, to patrole the streets. There was, however, no riot; decency with quiet joy prevailed. The noise of the cannon disturbed the Queen, which, as soon as known, the well-bred citizens of Windsor, caused that part, which was among other marks of joy, to cease. The following day, the Prince of Wales and Prince Frederick took the most undisguised pains to express to every friend of mine their extreme satisfaction upon my success, and to one friend—I believe more than one—they said, '*we* have had a most complete victory;' they had heard that I was to be at Mr. Chesshyre's, and expressed their hopes that I would come upon the Terrace in the castle next night. I had not then left Lord Middleton's, at Pepper Harrow, who was, during my whole business, most obliging, and I discovered much good judgment and understanding in him. When I got to Bagshot, I received two messages, the one from gentlemen in the town of Windsor, to invite me to a dinner they would order; the other from the inhabitants of the town, to hope I would come to them, that they would meet me and attend me in. I must confess I felt much inclination to comply, as a most flattering attention; but, after almost persuading myself that the King deserved what he, perhaps, would see, and that I was not in

debt to him—at least, to his good intentions—for anything, I more gravely considered that I might be exposed to much censure, that I had been presuming enough and would not finish without insulting his Majesty: to this thought, I considered the sergeant and twelve men that had been ready three nights before to patrole the streets with loaded arms, might again be placed, and that might end in my friends *being shot at without mercy—that no mob would be called Admiral Keppel's mob,* to disturb the quiet of his Majesty, and every scandalous and false aspersion thrown out. In short, I sent my excuses with a promise that I should take some opportunity of paying my respects in the town.

"Whilst I was resting at Bagshot, just before bedtime, Captain George Keppel surprised me with his appearance. I learnt from him that he had come home express from his Admiral; that he had taken a packet-boat, conveying Mr. Laurens, once President of the Congress in America, to Holland. The captain told me that he had taken out of the water, (which had failed of sinking,) a very large bag of papers, which he had brought home for the King's ministers. Whether there had been more he could not tell. He had been very civil to his prisoner; who, after his bad luck in being taken, found out that he had fallen into the hands of a moderate young man, and had no

difficulty in talking with him. He told Captain Keppel he should not answer any questions put to him by Ministers. The unfortunate gentleman is confined in the Tower.* The Admiralty have given the Captain the Æolus, of 32 guns. Admiral Edwards appointed George Berkeley to George Keppel's ship, the Vestal, so that my friend at last gets post. Captain Keppel has been questioned by Lord Stormont and Lord George Germain, why he does not go to St. James's. The young man judges for himself; I have not meddled in it. He says, seizing and making capture of an unfortunate gentleman is no triumph to him. If he had met and taken a ship of the enemy's of equal or more force than the ship he commanded, he should have been proud of it, and would have gone before the King's presence.

* "His Excellency the Hon. Henry Laurens," as he had been styled by the British Commissioners, was a mild, humane man. He suffered the most rigorous confinement, and was deprived of the presence of his children and other relations and friends. By a singular coincidence he was confined in a prison of which Lord Cornwallis was governor, while Lord Cornwallis himself was a prisoner of Mr. Laurens' son, by whom he was treated with the greatest respect, courtesy, and kindness!

Mr. Laurens was the personal friend of the Countess of Huntingdon, who "immediately on hearing of his committal, made application to Lord Viscount Stormont and Lord George Germain for permission to visit him, but her request was refused; and during his confinement, which was more than a year, he was treated with great severity, being denied, for the most part, all intercourse with his friends, and forbidden the use of pen, ink, and paper."—Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon.

"I can't send your Lordship information from the West Indies. We are in expectation of news every day; but you must not expect me to judge of such an enemy as France and Spain make, when they are joined. After their leaving the situation they were in, when first the Spanish fleet was joined by Mons. De Guichen, sure of conquest among the British and West India Islands, I can guess nothing about them. Mons. Tiernay is safe with his squadron and troops at Rhoda Islands. A squadron of French and Spanish ships with troops are said to be sailed some time past, to reinforce him; and a French squadron with troops are now ready at Brest to sail; I imagine for the West Indies. Many of the French ships now there are in a bad condition, and must come to Europe. Sir George Rodney says he must send many home, but among the bad ships there are some in so alarming a condition that he dares not venture them home for fear of drowning the crews. The Minister's criers run against Admiral Graves, that he might have got to America before Mons. Tiernay.

"Lord Cornwallis' letter is much approved of, and his success puffed exceedingly: Ministers are getting spirits upon it. Young Knowles, in the Porcupine, of 24 guns, with a convoy, has been attacked by a French frigate of 32 guns, and another of 16 guns, has beat them off, and carried his convoy in, safe.

"If you mean to be early in town, you will oblige me by letting me hear from you. I have frequently wished you in town before the meeting of Parliament. I am at present without an opinion. The Duke of Rutland and others wished much to see you.

"My respects attend Lady Rockingham; I hope we shall meet in good health.

"I am ever, my dear Marquis,

"Your faithful servant,

"A. KEPPEL.

"P. S. Captain Keppel desires me to say, with his humble respects, that he has, from Admiral Edwards,* a Newfoundland puppy for Lady Rockingham."

The capture of Mr. Laurens, or rather the recovery of his papers, which had been thrown overboard, led to the discovery of a commercial treaty about to be entered upon between Amsterdam and the American colonies. This induced our government to remonstrate, and finally, on the 20th of December, to declare war against Holland.

Upon this occasion, Captain Keppel became possessed of a curious prize, which he presented to his uncle, the Admiral. This was a full-length portrait of George Washington, and is now at Qui-

* Admiral Richard Edwards, (or "*Toby*" Edwards, as Keppel used to call him,) was, in 1788, Commander-in-chief in the Medway and at the Nore: he died in 1794.

denham, Lord Albemarle's seat in Norfolk. In the background, are seen English prisoners under American escort. Washington himself is represented as leaning with one hand upon a cannon; he is dressed in an uniform of blue and buff; a broad riband of garter blue is over his right shoulder, and at his feet is a banner, which denotes that the badge was that of the Order of the "Cincinnati." The picture itself had been intended for the Stadtholder of Holland.

As this picture (which persons yet living remember coming in the Admiral's possession, in the manner and at the period already mentioned) involves two historical difficulties, the writer will, perhaps, be excused for a short digression from the more immediate business of the narrative.

Washington is here represented, in the year 1780, as decorated with the badge of the Cincinnati, whereas the order itself is supposed not to have had any existence until nearly four years subsequent to this period, and the badge in which Washington is drawn is said never to have been worn in America. "While Jefferson," says Tucker, "was at Annapolis, he wrote to General Washington, *in April*, 1784, on the subject of the Cincinnati Association;"* and, in a letter from Benjamin Franklin to his daughter, Mrs. Bache, dated "*Paris, January* 26, 1784," he thanks her for the newspapers relating to

* Tucker's Life of Jefferson, vol. i. p. 184.

"the Cincinnati."* The context of both quotations evidently refers to the Order as a recent institution. This is the first difficulty; we shall come presently to that relating to the Badge. The "Cincinnati Association," as it was at first called, was formed of officers of the American army; it was established to commemorate the successful issue of the war of the Independence, and "with a view of keeping alive the recollection of their past dangers, and their common triumph."† As it was mostly from agricultural pursuits that these gentlemen were taken to defend their liberties, they adopted the name of the Roman Patriot who was similarly employed when his country's service required him to take the field. It is somewhat extraordinary, that a man of Washington's sound sense should not have at once perceived the inconsistency of commemorating, by an aristocratic institution, the establishment of a democratic government. The absurdity does not, however, seem to have occurred to his mind until April, 1784, when he wrote to Thomas Jefferson for advice upon the subject. The answer must have confirmed him in any misgivings by which he may have been previously visited. Jefferson strongly condemned the Order, especially that part of the constitution which made it hereditary. "It is,"

* Annual Register, p. 380.

† Tucker's Life of Jefferson, vol. i. p. 184.

says he, "against the confederation—against the letter of some of our constitutions—against the spirit of all of them: the foundation on which all these are built, is the natural equality of man, the denial of every pre-eminence but that of legal office, and particularly the denial of a pre-eminence by birth."*

About the same time that Washington received this answer, he must have become acquainted with the letter which Franklin wrote to his daughter. The Doctor makes the same objections as Jefferson, to establishing a rank of nobility. He then attacks the Order with all his powers of ridicule. He contends that honours, instead of descending, ought, in imitation of the Chinese, to ascend; and wishes that the Cincinnati "would direct their badges to be worn by their fathers and mothers, instead of handing them down to their children."

By a ludicrous calculation, he shews that, in nine generations, for which he assigns three hundred years, the share of the original Chevalier in the then existing Knight, would not amount to more than a 512th part. He then falls foul of the motto, the name, and the badge. "Some," says he, "find fault with the Latin, as wanting classical elegance and correctness; others object to the title, as not properly assumable by any but General Washington, and a few others who served without pay; others object to the bald eagle, as looking too much like

* Randolph's Memoirs of Jefferson, vol. i. pp. 224, 225.

a dindon, or turkey. For my own part, I wish the bald eagle had not been chosen as the representative of our country; he is a bird of bad moral character; he does not get his living honestly,—too lazy to fish for himself, he watches the labour of the fishing hawk; and when that diligent bird has at length taken a fish, the bald eagle pursues him, and takes it from him. With all this injustice, he is never in good case, but, like those among men who live by sharping and robbing, he is generally poor, and often lousy; besides, he is a rank coward; the little king-bird, not bigger than a sparrow, drives him out of the district; he is therefore by no means a proper emblem for the brave and honest Cincinnati of America, who have driven all the king-birds from our country, though exactly fit for that order of Knights which the French call *Chevaliers d'Industrie.*"

"I am on this account not displeased," he says, "that the eagle looks more like a turkey. For, in truth, the turkey is a more respectable bird, and withal a true original native of America. . . . . He is, besides, (though a little vain and silly, 'tis true, but not the worse emblem for that,) a bird of courage, and would not hesitate to attack a grenadier of the British guards, who should presume to invade his farm-yard with a red coat."*

Washington now became very desirous to do

* Annual Register, pp. 380 to 384.

away with the Order altogether; but this was not to be done. An envoy had been sent to France to provide the ribands and medals, and the order had been offered to many French officers who had returned to their own country, and, not having the same objection to hereditary honours which a few years later they might have entertained, readily signified their acceptance. The eagle and riband were therefore " retained because they were worn, and they (the Americans) wished them to be worn by their friends who were in a country where they would not be objects of offence; but *themselves* (the Americans) *never wore them;*"* which quotation contains our second historical difficulty, and to which the picture gives a direct contradiction.

Meetings of the Order were at first held annually on the 4th of July, the anniversary of the Independence, but afterwards they only assembled every third year. In some of the States, these meetings are still holden; but, in 1824, the establishment in the State of Virginia was broken up, and the funds, amounting to 15,000 dollars, were made over to Washington College.†

The new Parliament assembled on the 31st of October. In the course of the debate on the Address, Mr. Fox, as the question was about to be

* Tucker' Life of Jefferson, vol. i. p. 188.

† See Tucker's Life of Jefferson for a more detailed account of this Order.

put, addressed the house in a long and able speech; in the course of which he severely arraigned Ministers for the insult they had put upon the navy, in appointing Sir Hugh Palliser to the governorship of Greenwich Hospital. The cause of this appointment being given, he did not doubt, was, not Sir Hugh's conduct on board the Formidable, but his subsequent behaviour, his conduct against Admiral Keppel, his attempts to ruin the reputation of that gallant officer; and he felt the less wonder at this, because it was the characteristic of the present reign to run down, vilify, and defame great and popular men, and to set up, support, and countenance and reward the infamous.

Admiral Keppel said, he should not have taken the liberty to say a word, considering what the House had heard from his honourable relation, (Mr. Fox,) after whom he was conscious he was extremely ill qualified to rise as a speaker, had not the noble Lord (George Germaine) talked of our having a better navy next year than we had at any time last war. He wished the noble Lord had not gone quite so far; he did not expect to see a better navy, and should, as he believed the country would, be perfectly satisfied to see as good a navy as we had afloat in the course of the last war. He then complained of the scandalous neglect of our navy, both in fitting out, equipment, and in its operations; and said, the officers had done their duty, and they

always would do their duty, he was convinced; but they had not been properly supported. Why was Sir George Rodney left as he had been, without reinforcement, after he had written repeatedly for more ships? There were those present who knew he was speaking facts. If a few ships had been sent to Sir George Rodney early, he might have done a very essential service to his country, which, for want of a few more ships, he was obliged to decline attempting. The whole conduct of the war, he said, shewed want of vigour and of wisdom in the administration; and the only reason why France had not been more successful against us was, he believed, because the French Cabinet were equally divided, equally irresolute, and their counsels as bad as ours. It was their want of decision, and not our prudence, that saved us. But, after all, they had been suffered to send out a fleet and army to Rhode Island, under Monsieur Tiernay, unmolested by us, when we had it in our power to prevent it. At that time, had a few of Mr. Walsingham's ships been taken, and added to others ready, they might have sailed and blocked up Brest harbour, and by that means have rendered Tiernay's attempting to sail impracticable; but, according to the usual custom of the present administration, who, in all their operations, were too late, they made no effort to prevent the mischief; they contented themselves with tardily endea-

vouring to apply a bad remedy. They did not offer to stop Tiernay; but they sent a fleet to follow him. At the time Tiernay sailed, there was a naval force lying in Cawsand Bay, at Plymouth, capable of intercepting him. This was a fact, which he dared Ministers to deny—a fact, which he pledged himself to prove at the bar of the House, whenever the House should think proper to call upon him for that purpose.

On the 13th of November, Lord Lisburne moved that 91,000 seamen should be the number voted for the succeeding year.

Admiral Keppel said "he was glad to hear 91,000 seamen were moved for; he wished the number had been still larger." He then spoke of the manner of manning ships, saying that one-third was usually ordinary landsmen, one-third marines, and one-third seamen. The latter proportion was as few seamen as could possibly navigate the ships; it must not, therefore, be lessened on any account. He was also glad to hear that we had now ninety sail of the line in service; but begged to know whether we should have so many four months hence? His reason for putting this question was, because it was a well-known fact that several of the ships now in the West Indies were so much worn by the service, that it was a question whether the Admiral* would trust them home in the winter."

* Sir George Rodney.

Mr. Fox said he should vote for the motion, but not without previously pledging himself, after the holidays, "to move for the dismissal of the Earl of Sandwich, and afterwards for bringing that noble Lord to condign punishment."

On the 1st of February, Mr. Fox brought forward the motion, of which he had given notice, relative to the appointment of Sir Hugh Palliser to the government of Greenwich Hospital. He disclaimed all personal motives; public enmity alone influenced his conduct. He considered the Governor of Greenwich Hospital as one great cause of those calamities under which this country was now suffering, therefore he felt against him all that public enmity which such a sense of his conduct ought to inspire. It was on these grounds, and these only, that he was the public enemy of the honourable Admiral—the public enemy of those who abetted and supported him. Having said that he was actuated by no motives of personal enmity, he also assured the House he was not influenced, on the present occasion, by private friendship. Not that he disclaimed private friendship. No! God knew he considered his intimacy and connexion with his honourable relation who sat below him (Admiral Keppel) as the chief honour and happiness of his life, but his honourable relation's character, his virtue, his glory, were too firmly established to need

assistance. If ever there was a man whose character met the description of the poet exactly, "*merses profundo pulchrior evenit*," the Admiral was that man. Let those who had attempted against his life and his honour bear witness to this truth. See him attacked, charged, criminated, sent to trial on an accusation of the most serious nature! What is the consequence? He comes purified from the ordeal; his honour is clearer than before; his glory beams with renovated lustre! See him at Windsor! See the attempts that are made, successfully made, to separate him from constituents who had thought well of him before, and always till then been happy in their representative, and, for aught he knew, had been his constituents for two, or three, or four successive parliaments! What is the consequence? The county of Surrey, who saw with indignation the oppression practised, who saw the enormous influence of the crown opposed to virtue, popularity, and reputation—that influence of the crown of which the last parliament had complained, and justly complained—they receive him with open arms—they knew his merit, his integrity, and his virtue — they revered his splendid character, and they invited him to become their representative. Thus oppression, as it always will do, produced its opposite effect, and thus his honourable relation, by being driven from Windsor by the influence of

the crown, is sent to parliament the representative of one of the first counties in England. Therefore he stood too high in fame, too full of glory, to require additional support, or to make the serving him a motive in the design of the motion he was about to make. He was not unaware, it might be said, how improper it was, when unanimity was so necessary in the navy, to stir a matter, the revival of which might renew animosities. To these opinions he fully assented; *non movere quieta* was a maxim to which he entirely subscribed. Be it upon their heads, therefore, who began to stir the old cause of discontent! Let those answer for the consequences who revived the dispute; he washed his hands of it. It was the Ministers who had broached the subject; those who had advised his Majesty to appoint Sir Hugh Palliser Governor of Greenwich Hospital. The officers of the navy in general would be disgusted, because they would see that honour and bravery combined were not the merits that were now thought worthy of reward. Discipline and subordination would cease, and the spirit of the navy would be entirely broken.

Lord North said, "The honourable gentleman (Mr. Fox) has said that Sir Hugh Palliser's resignation of his places and employments was a tacit admission to his criminality; for his part, he believed Sir Hugh Palliser resigned in order to restore

the public peace, in order that the storm, the frenzy, the madness of the times, might subside. Had the honourable gentleman forgot the temper of the times, when the trial of Admiral Keppel was over? Had it totally slipped his memory that the town was in a tumult for three nights together, illuminated by command of a mob, and nothing but disorder to be seen in every quarter? Had the honourable gentleman forgot that he and his friends were obliged to go out early in a cold, raw February morning, to endeavour to quell the tumult and disperse the mob? These circumstances considered, it surely was a laudable part in the Vice-Admiral to retire till men came to their senses again, and till reason took place of frenzy and popular madness?"

Mr. Miller defended Sir Hugh Palliser's appointment, and contended that "an acquittal by a majority of a court, after a long, rigid, and scrupulous trial, was much more honourable than a rash and good-natured unanimity."

The principal champion in defence of Sir Hugh Palliser was Commodore, (or, as he was more commonly called,) Governor Johnstone. This officer was not held in much estimation in his profession; but he had considerable powers of oratory, and excelled in personal invective. He had formerly been a Whig, but had seceded from his party; and his speeches were marked by all that bitterness of feeling

against former friends, which so frequently characterizes the political apostate. He seems to have had a kindred feeling with Sir Hugh Palliser; for, the following year, in order to screen his own incapacity, he preferred charges against a Captain Sutton, who was honourably acquitted, and in his turn brought an action against Johnstone, for "charging him maliciously with an offence of which he was innocent." Sutton obtained a verdict of 5000*l.* damages. Johnstone applied for a second trial; and a second verdict awarded the increased sum of 6000*l.* against him.

To give the more poignancy to his strictures, Governor Johnstone prefaced his attack upon Keppel by professing the highest respect for his character:—

"Admiral Keppel was a brave, a gallant, and a worthy officer. No man was more beloved or respected in his profession, and no man more deservedly. But he could not agree that the 27th of July was a day that gave any glory to this country; it was the most unfortunate day this country ever saw. What! teach France what she had been long accustomed to suppose impossible! Convince her that a French fleet, on a summer's day, could engage a British fleet, superior in every respect, and get safe back to port! Good God! It was scarcely credible, and yet it was too true! Admiral Keppel undoubtedly was a brave man and a good officer; but that generosity of mind which rendered him so

amiable might lead him into error. He did not defend Sir Hugh Palliser's political conduct; but when he looked into these trials, and saw how nobly the Vice-Admiral rushed into action, and received the whole fire of the French fleet; when he viewed him ranging along the enemy's line, and bravely backing his topsails that he might continue to fight the longer; and when he saw that, after he had passed the last ship of the enemy, he wore his own ship to renew the action, and torn, shattered, and disabled as he was, like a British bull-dog, turned to have another bout with them!—when he looked at this, he honoured his zeal, and thought him entitled to every possible praise.

In describing the temper of the public on Keppel's acquittal, he said: "Universal riot and disorder not only prevailed, with unbridled licence, without doors, but was shamelessly avowed, abetted, and defended in both Houses of Parliament. What! London illuminated for three nights together, on account of the glory gained on the 27th of July! Oh, God!—oh, God!" (covering his face with his hands.) "Nobody could credit it—every man of sense knew better. They knew that the popular rapture and joy which burst out in such an extraordinary manner had something of a more reasonable foundation. It was not the glory gained on the 27th of July that they imputed the illumination of London; neither was it for the Admiral's having conveyed home mercantile fleets

that were in port before he sailed, they ascribed the general joy upon the acquittal of Admiral Keppel; but the public satisfaction universally felt on finding that a brave officer, a skilful commander, and a good-natured, honest man, had come off with honour, after an arduous trial.

"He could not help lamenting at the sight of so respectable a name as that of Admiral Keppel subscribed to a string of resolutions from a Surrey committee. It did not, in his opinion, become the honourable Admiral to set his name to a declaration that the American war was unjust. What would officers, gone and going abroad, under instructions to do their duty upon the American service, think when they learnt that Admiral Keppel—the brave and worthy Admiral Keppel—the idol of the navy, the god of its idolatry, had joined in declaring that all the officers who had served in the American war were no better than pirates, and that the war was a war of injustice and oppression?"

Admiral Keppel said, "With regard to the argument used by the honourable officer, and by the noble Lord (North), that a court-martial had no right to pronounce upon the motives of the accuser, he considered it as striking at an usage which he had ever looked upon as the rule and bulwark of the service, and without which all rank, command, confidence, and security would be annihilated. So fully convinced was he of this, that if ever the prac-

tice were abolished, he declared he would sooner give up his commission than sit on a court-martial. The honourable gentleman who had spoken last, had been very strong in his expressions respecting the 27th of July. God knew he liked as little to hear of that day as the honourable gentleman; but as he felt the satisfaction of having done his duty, as he had the additional comfort of having an unanimous acquittal of a court-martial after a trial, and as he had received the thanks of that House for his conduct, which he should ever conceive as the highest honour of his life, he was most perfectly indifferent as to any oblique reflections, or any direct imputations that might be thrown upon him, either in that House, or by those writers who were paid by Ministers for attacking him in pamphlets and newspapers. The honourable officer had said a great deal about the conduct of the Vice-Admiral in the course of the action on the 27th of July, and had said he had fought like a lion. He had never impeached his bravery; on the contrary, he had allowed that the Vice-Admiral behaved gallantly as he passed the French line. What he had to complain of, was the Vice-Admiral's neglect of signals after the engagement; for if the lion gets into his den, and wont come out of it, there is an end of the lion.

"The honourable officer, among other pointed sarcasms on his conduct, had said he was thanked by the House for sending home fleets which were

in port before he sailed. So far was this from being a fair account of the events of his command, that it was undeniably true there never was a year of war in which a naval commander was more successful in the protection of the commercial interests of the kingdom. It was his aim at the time, and it would ever be his boast. He had sent in three several fleets of immense value safe, and in order to effect this completely, he had turned back with his whole fleet, (the largest he had ever seen under the command of one man,) and had not altered his course till he had driven the convoys up the Channel, and left them in perfect safety."

Mr. Burke, in the course of a long speech, said—"No one subject that had ever, in the whole course of his life, challenged his notice, had been studied by him with so much attention, and so much care, as the transactions of the 27th of July, because the honour and the life of the dearest friend he had on earth, made those transactions of the most serious importance to him; and whenever so exalted, so virtuous a man—a man for whom he felt the most ardent esteem, and the warmest friendship—was put into a situation of danger, and his life set upon the hazard of a trial, he felt himself irresistibly impelled to give him every possible countenance and support—though the support of conscious virtue was all that Admiral Keppel needed, and God knew no man possessed conscious virtue in a higher degree!—

and to share personally with him in the perils of the conflict, and in the disgrace or honour of the event. He had not only been present at the trial, and listened to the minutest particular of the evidence with the most attentive ear, but he had read every syllable that had come from the press upon the subject that bore anything like the stamp of authority. He had perused the three trials (the one published by the Judge-advocate, the other published by the short-hand writer employed by Admiral Keppel, and the third published by the Vice-Admiral) over and over; he could therefore, with the fullest confidence, assert, that the charge brought against his noble and worthy friend was malicious and ill-founded. What was the charge in one part? A charge of negligence urged against Admiral Keppel, the most diligent of all men! But the honourable Vice-Admiral has said that he sailed singly and alone into the midst of the enemy's fleet, inferring from that, that he was neglected, and meant to be sacrificed. To prove that this assertion was altogether ill-founded, he would read an extract or two from the trial, shewing that so far from the Formidable being left alone in this perilous situation, the Formidable was followed so closely by some ships, and led on by others, that it was with the utmost difficulty mischief was prevented, either from the ships running foul of each other, or one or other of them receiving the fire of those that were nearest."

Mr. Burke dwelt on the result of these extracts for some time, and said—"It thence was evident, that so far from the Formidable being left alone, she was jammed in among a crowd of ships that were at hand to support her."

Mr. Burke ridiculed Mr. Miller's argument, that unanimity was liable to suspicion, and that a bare acquittal was at least equal to an unanimous and honourable acquittal, but that an acquittal with censure was much better than either a bare or an unanimous acquittal; in order to have completed his own climax he had only to have added, that a condemnation was best of all, and that on the same principles that had governed his other positions—viz., that "an acquittal by a majority was better than a rash and good-natured unanimity."

"With respect to the public illuminations, he knew as well as the honourable Commodore, that the people did not rejoice because the trial proved that the 27th of July was a day of triumph to Great Britain. No; they rejoiced, because they saw that a gallant officer, a worthy and an honest man, had escaped from the malice of his accuser; because so respectable, so excellent a public character, was acquitted with honour; and because generosity, sincerity, and virtue had gained a victory over malice, treachery, and meanness! These, and these only, were the causes of the public illuminations and rejoicings; and what honest Englishman

was there whose bosom would not expand with the highest satisfaction and the most exalted rapture on such an occasion?"

Mr. Burke commented, with much humour, upon Lord North's awkward and tedious manner of preparing the amendment; and created a laugh by charging the noble Lord with being employed in "knotting and splicing"* the motion, and in fishing the mast of it, observing, at the same time, that he need not have fired a gun to leeward as a signal of distress, it being pretty obvious his mizen top-mast was shot away.

The Right Hon. Thomas Townshend, speaking of Commodore Johnstone, said, "He was not afraid to encounter his arguments, but he did dread his venomous praise." Being told that he was in the gallery, he said, "I am glad that he hears me; I will raise my voice, that he may hear me distinctly: I am glad that he knows my opinion of him," &c.

It was past two o'clock in the morning when the question on the amendment was put. The house divided,—for the amendment, 214; against it, 149. The main question was then agreed to.

The same morning, the following characteristic correspondence passed between Admiral Keppel and Commodore Johnstone:—

* The excuse made by Sir Hugh Palliser for not obeying his commander's signal.

ADMIRAL KEPPEL TO COMMODORE JOHNSTONE.

"Friday morning, Feb. 2nd, 1781.

"SIR,—If your feelings and mine are in any degree alike, you must not much wonder at receiving this letter. The writing of it would have been unnecessary, if I had not before troubled you with the recommendation of a midshipman. Your reply, I am ready to confess, was civil and obliging; but as I now desire not to incommode you with the young man, I think it fair and open to say, obligation from any other person will embarrass me less in the sincerity of my thanks.

"I am, Sir, without giving you further trouble,

"Your very obedient and humble servant,

"A. KEPPEL."

COMMODORE JOHNSTONE'S REPLY.

"2nd Feb., 1781.

"SIR,—As I received your recommendation with a sincere desire to obey your commands, so I shall order the person in question to be discharged, with an equal respect to your inclinations, being at all times willing to approve myself,

"Sir,

"Your obedient and humble servant,

"GEO. JOHNSTONE."

On the 19th February, the conduct of Admiral Darby was discussed in the House of Commons.

The Admiral had been obliged to retire before a superior force of the enemy. Admiral Keppel spoke at some length, and with much fairness, on the subject. "He did not consider that Admiral Darby was, or ought to be, censured in the motion; but that, at the same time, it was quite proper to inquire into the subject."

It appears from a passage in his speech, that he was one of those who first recommended the adoption of copper bottoms to ships of war:—

"It was said that the British fleet had not looked at the enemy. This was the fault; for though the fleet was inferior, and though it only consisted of seventeen ships, yet they were coppered, and coppered ships could look at anything. He advised the First Lord of the Admiralty *to copper all the ships in the navy;* he had nothing to impute to the noble Lord on this account; he would give him credit for what he had done in this respect, though he had not done it in the most handsome way. The measure was adopted about six months after he had quitted the command, and the good effects had been already felt; for, during the last summer, the fleet had been out a very long time, much too long, in his opinion, for the occasion, and they had wanted no repairs, nor docking when they came into port."

The motion was ultimately rejected.

On the 22nd of March, upon a motion of Mr.

Minchin's, relative to the management of the navy, Admiral Keppel recommended the establishment of marines, as a distinct corps. " He rose," he said, " principally to take notice of a subject of the utmost importance to the country, and which called for the most sober inquiry ; and that was, that we had lost forty-two thousand eight hundred men by desertion in the course of the present war. This was a calamity which had been unfelt before in this country, and unprecedented in the British service. It was a circumstance which of itself would convince him of the necessity of inquiring into the state of the navy, and adopting some regulations for the improvement of its order and discipline. He thought some measure should be adopted to prevent desertion, as many thousands, who had cost the country fifty, sixty, or seventy pounds a man, had never been serviceable to the amount of one penny. As to the employment of marines on board, it was a measure which had been thought of when he was at the Admiralty Board, though not adopted till some time afterwards. He considered it as a very useful regulation, and he sincerely wished that there was *a body of marines brought up expressly to serve on board, though he never wished them to wear a red coat, or any badge which distinguished them from sailors.* Some honourable members, who were connected with Ministers, had declared they wished our fleet might meet the French and Spaniards. He hoped to God,

if the French had sailed, and joined the Spaniards, our fleet might not meet them! He did not wish to paint matters in a black colour, but he could not help feeling that if our fleet fought an enemy so vastly superior as the combined fleet must be, the consequence might be such as this country would not easily, nor soon, get over. He was astonished to hear the Ministers' friends, when he met them in the streets, say they did not know whether the French fleet had sailed or not. Had Ministers no copper-bottomed light ships cruising off Brest harbour, to bring them early intelligence of such an event, and to communicate it to Mr. Darby? Surely they did not wait for the post to bring them the news through Brussels, Flanders, or the Netherlands, in which case they would not receive it till a fortnight or three weeks after the French had sailed?"

Sir Hugh Palliser, who rose next, spoke in support of Ministers, and "complained that the enemies to this country, he knew not whether they were foreign or domestic enemies, had sowed dissensions amongst the shipwrights, and poisoned their minds, so as to induce them to send petitions and remonstrances to the Navy Board, complaining of the work appointed them to perform."

Admiral Keppel, upon hearing this, again rose and said, "he thought it due to the Duke of Richmond to declare that the discontented shipwrights had gone to Goodwood, and sought the noble

Duke's protection, when he instantly bid them to go back to their work, for he never would encourage anything that tended to shew a disposition to fly in the face of discipline."

In consequence of what passed in this debate, Mr. Penton brought in a bill for preventing desertions in the navy.

Some of the clauses in this bill were considered as highly injurious to the merchant service; especially one for inflicting a heavy penalty on all captains of merchant ships who should knowingly employ a deserter.

On the second reading of the bill, Keppel protested against it. "In his opinion, if it passed, the House would be obliged to pass another for manning the merchant ships; for the present bill would not leave them the means of getting hands to navigate their vessels. There was something radically wrong in the management of the navy, otherwise we should not hear of such desertions as of late had thinned the service. In the last war they were little known. He ascribed these desertions in a great measure to the splitting of ship's companies, and separating those who wished to serve together under some particular officer to whom they were personally attached. Serving under the officer they liked, they never thought of desertion; but being sent to serve under an officer

they did not know, they fled from a service they disliked, and thus the ships were thinned. He knew an instance of a ship's company that was so dispersed, that not above two or three hundred were suffered to remain on board. The ship he alluded to was the Victory, which he had had the honour to command. The Admiralty ought to reflect whether they had not, by this treatment of the navy, given rise to this uncommon desertion. He was sorry he had not been able to attend the House while the Greenwich Hospital bill was going through it; he would have taken care to speak in favour of the common men, when those whose business it was to protect them had sacrificed their interests. By that bill, every common man's share of prize-money, which should not have been claimed for three years, was given to the Hospital. He was sorry the term had not been enlarged to six years. He knew of two instances in the last war, where the captors had not been able to return to England for four years after they had made their prizes: in one case they were entitled to thirty-five pounds a man, the whole sum amounting to eight thousand pounds; and yet they were never able to get a shilling of their money, because the application had not been made within the time specified in the act. It therefore was not surprising that men should be ready to desert when they found so little encourage-

ment to do their duty. He just touched upon the late loss of the Eustatia fleet; he said he would not dwell upon it; he should only cry shame! shame! upon those who had suffered a paltry squadron of five sail of the line to insult our coast with impunity."

The bill was ultimately rejected by a majority of eight.

Towards the close of the session, the treatment of the American prisoners was brought before Parliament. Mr. Fox presented a petition from some American prisoners complaining that they were treated with less humanity than the French and Spaniards; that they had not a sufficient allowance of bread, and were scantily furnished with clothing. Mr. Fox asked, "was it fit, prudent, or wise, that we should make a distinction in favour of the old inveterate enemies of this country, to the prejudice of those who were, and whom we hoped would one day be again our fellow subjects. If any preference were to be shewn, he conceived it ought with prudence and policy to be made in favour of America, but at least there ought to be no distinction made to their disadvantage. He would therefore, he said, move for an address to his Majesty to put them on the same footing, unless some gentleman in office would give the House an assurance that without any farther proceeding it should be done."

Admiral Keppel followed Mr. Fox, and spoke to the same effect. "He supported the justice and the generosity of the idea of treating them at least with equal kindness; and recommended to the House to adopt the wise policy of conciliating the minds of the Americans by offices of tenderness and predilection, by which they might be prompted to treat the subjects of this country in their hands with equal attention; and by this interchange of kindness, the old friendship and connexion might be renewed. He said that when he was at Plymouth, in the command of the fleet, he received a letter from a person in that gaol, stating that he was called upon by a large body of the American prisoners then in custody, to apply to him to solicit his interference in their favour, that they might be permitted to serve his Majesty, on board his royal navy, against the French, the ancient enemies of Great Britain. They were eager to do this, from the regard which they had for Britain. Though as Americans they had taken up arms for the preservation of their domestic freedom, yet they were eager and anxious to exert themselves against the common enemy. If they were granted this request, they would then cheerfully submit to be tried for their offence in taking up arms in the original cause of America against the mother country. The person who wrote this letter said that he was not an American, but an

Englishman taken on board an American privateer; that he had fought under him (the Admiral) in the reduction of the Havannah, and was anxious again to share in the dangers and triumphs of his country. This offer he considered as so honourable to themselves, as well as advantageous to the country, that he transmitted the letter to the Admiralty with an earnest recommendation on his own part to accept the proposal, and give him liberty to take advantage of the offer. About two hundred excellent seamen would have been procured by this means for his Majesty's service; but the Admiralty, for what reason he was never able to learn, had thought proper to refuse the request at the time, though they had adopted it since."

The motion was afterwards altered to "that it is the opinion of this House, that the American prisoners are entitled to an equal allowance of bread with the French, Spanish and Dutch prisoners." This amendment, however, was rejected by a majority of nearly three to one.

CHAPTER X.

KEPPEL'S REMARKS ON THE MISMANAGEMENT OF THE NAVY—PARLIAMENTARY PROCEEDINGS.

Observations upon Sir John Barrow's eulogy of Lord Sandwich—Keppel's remarks upon the mismanagement of the Navy—Death of General Keppel—Keppel's speeches in Parliament—Letter to Captain Jervis.

1781 TO 1782.

ATTENTION has been frequently directed in the foregoing pages to the official and political conduct of Lord Sandwich, in his high and responsible trust of First Lord of the Admiralty. His claims to approbation for the manner in which he discharged his various and important duties would seem to rest upon a rather questionable foundation, if they are tried by the facts above recorded, and if facts rather than party or personal prejudices are allowed their due weight in the examination of public characters. We have seen, in our review of one period of Lord Keppel's life, the most distinguished officers driven from the service, discontent and mutiny arising among the seamen, our coasts in so defenceless a state that an enemy's fleet was able

to sail triumphantly up the British Channel; the dock-yards unfurnished, one portion of a fleet dismantled to supply the pressing exigencies of another, and the strongest remonstrances or most urgent demands of a commander-in-chief met with indifference or contempt by the minister whose peculiar province it was to prevent or remedy those evils, and to receive these representations. Yet even in our own days, Lord Sandwich has been a subject for eulogy. In his "Life of Lord Howe," Sir John Barrow is so pleased with Lord Sandwich's official conduct, while presiding over the affairs of the Admiralty, that, in discussing the expediency of placing a lay rather than a professional man at the head of that Board, he brings forward this nobleman as an example how much better the business was conducted while a civilian, and not a sailor, filled the president's chair.

We will not here enter upon the general question, further than to declare our coincidence with the opinion expressed by Sir Thomas Trowbridge, in a late debate, that "the man of the highest character, integrity, and station, is the fittest person to be a First Lord of the Admiralty."* Our present business is to consider the conduct of Lord Sandwich, while in the occupation of that post.

Without inquiring too minutely into the grounds

* Debate on Sir Charles Napier's motion, March 22, 1842.

of Sir John Barrow's preference or paradox—for, from the instance he selects, we are sometimes inclined to view it as the latter—we may be allowed, perhaps, to remark, that the defence of Lord Sandwich is the more singular, from being undertaken by the biographer of Lord Howe; for a biographer is usually presumed, and indeed is justly permitted, to have some predilections in favour of the subject of his narrative; and Sir John Barrow, however zealous he may be for the fame of Lord Sandwich, does not deny that Lord Howe received harsh and unwarrantable treatment at his hands.

As regards the subject of this present memoir, it is evident that if the conduct of Lord Sandwich to Admiral Keppel can be justified, or, in other words, if the acts of the Admiralty during the presidency of Lord Sandwich are defensible, then not only was the conduct of Admiral Keppel inexcusable, but also that of the whole party with whom he was politically connected.

Under these circumstances, therefore, it will not, perhaps, be considered a digression from the proper subject of this memoir to look somewhat more closely into the official conduct of Lord Sandwich, and to apply to the eulogy he has so unexpectedly received, as well as to the assumption raised upon it, the test of facts and experience. For this purpose the author has availed himself of the following statement, drawn up by one who was both the ob-

ject of his persecution, and who, as his successor in office, was well qualified to appreciate the vigilance, the economy, and the general policy of his naval administration.

The document from which these extracts are made was furnished by Keppel to Lord Rockingham, to enable him, as it would appear, to establish charges of accusation against the then First Lord of the Admiralty.

Each page of the manuscript, which is somewhat voluminous, is headed by the word "FACTS," and on the margin is a column pointing out "the requisite papers" to be called for. In this document is set forth the incapacity of Lord Sandwich, as First Lord of the Admiralty, from 1771 to 1781.

The subject is divided into two general heads.

The first examines into the means that were employed for preserving and putting the navy upon a proper footing, considering the state in which it was received from Lord Hawke, in 1771, and the sums that were voted for that service.

The second inquires into the use Lord Sandwich made of the force, which, during his administration, was put into his hands.

Under the first head, is enumerated the number of ships given over by Lord Hawke; how many of them were in commission, how many in ordinary, their several rates, the number of years they had been built or repaired, and the state in which they

must probably have been, respectively, after the service of those years.

"It will appear," says Keppel, "that when Lord Hawke resigned, he left eighty-one sail of the line fit for any service, and fifteen building; of these, fifty-nine were in commission, and twenty-two in ordinary." Keppel then gives a list, by which "it appears that seven new ships were built, from the year 1760, and that the whole of the ships in commission at Lord Hawke's resignation had been either built or repaired since the year 1764."

"Eleven new ships were built since the beginning of 1764, and eight repaired."

"It is said, by the First Lord of the Admiralty, that many of these ships were rotten, and he gives this as at once his reason and his excuse for breaking up or selling them. But still the question remains, why, considering the general necessary policy of this country, the particular appearance of our affairs, as well in the business of the Falkland islands, as previous to the commencement of hostilities by sea with France, and the immense sums voted for the repairs of the navy, he did not take care to replace those pretended rotten ships,—why he had not an eye to the increasing state of the navy of the house of Bourbon, and built up to that superiority, of which, when this country is deprived, she loses her dignity and endangers her existence. To prove whether he took effectual

steps for that purpose, examine the lists of the navy in December, 1777. In the year 1779, two years from that period, it only amounted to seventy-six sail of the line, besides six ships to receive men."

The second general head considers the operations of the several campaigns separately, and divides the operations into—Home, American, and West India service.

We shall confine our observations to the first of these heads—"Home Service," as that with which Admiral Keppel was more immediately connected.

1776.

"At home, Admiral Keppel was sent for, at the latter end of the year, by the first Lord of the Admiralty, in his Majesty's name, to offer him the command of the fleet, in case it should be necessary or expedient to send a large squadron to sea. The Admiral waited on the King in person, to express his readiness to obey, whenever his Majesty should be pleased to order him, and he requested of Lord Sandwich that the Victory might be fitted for his flag."

1777.

"For want of frigates, all the ships of the line in a condition to keep the sea, the three-deckers excepted, were constantly employed, during the winter months of November and December, in

cruising to intercept helpless merchant ships trading, but under suspicion of being bound, to North America."

1778.

"Government had every reason to suspect that M. de la Motte Piquet was to sail in the beginning of this year, either to America or to the West Indies, with a squadron of men-of-war, and some transports with troops. Captain Digby was ordered out on our side to watch his motions. De la Motte Piquet sailed, but returned again to Brest, on which Mr. Digby also came back to port. Detached ships of the line were, however, kept constantly cruising during the months of January, February, March, and April, by which unimportant service, and the service during the November and December preceding, the equipment of the fleet in the spring was so far disappointed that there were no resources found to defeat any of the subsequent immediate operations of the enemy."

"The papers relative to the expedition under M. D'Estaing were, for the most part, laid before the House in 1778. By them it appeared, that Ministers had the earliest information of the equipment and destination of that squadron, and of the time of its being to sail; yet, from the causes already assigned, and the general neglect of the Admiralty Board, they could not at first spare twelve sail of the line to prevent M. D'Estaing's

sailing through the Straits of Gibraltar. Afterwards, when he had passed the Straits, and when, with infinite difficulty, thirteen sail were got in some sort of readiness, and it was resolved to detach Vice-Admiral Byron in pursuit of him, this detachment was detained till the beginning of June, though it was known that the enemy had sailed in April for America, where they were to oppose Lord Howe's squadron of six sail of sixty-four gun ships, four of fifty guns, two forties, and some frigates, dispersed, as the service his Lordship was on necessarily required, from one end of the coast of America to the other. At length, Mr. Byron sailed, but, in such a condition were the ships under his command sent out, that they were shattered and dispersed by a short summer's gale; nor did any of them—two sail excepted, and they sickly and disabled—reach Lord Howe till after he had defeated, by the most wonderful display of naval abilities, all the attempts of M. D'Estaing, and pursued him to Boston, where he fled for safety."

The remaining observations of Admiral Keppel, upon 1778, relate to the transactions already related of the fleet then under his command.

1779.

"In the very beginning of this year, we find the enemy's fleet ready for service. M. De Grasse left

Brest, with six ships of the line, for the West Indies, in the month of February. On our side, Vice-Admiral Lord Shuldham had put to sea on the 1st of January, to escort our outward-bound West India trade. His force was considerable in itself, and was joined by Commodore Rowley, destined for the Islands, with seven ships. Yet his Lordship returned to port in February, without appearing to have received any orders to cruise before Brest with a view of intercepting De Grasse, who was suffered to sail unwatched and uninterrupted by the ships of England.

"About the same time, Sir Edward Hughes sailed for the West Indies with six ships. This force was generally considered unnecessarily strong, considering the other important services that called for more immediate exertion. It was well known to the Ministers that M. De la Motte Piquet was equipping at Brest; the intention of his sailing and his destination were equally known to them. Yet, in April, when he put to sea with six sail of the line, the whole of the English fleet, two cruisers excepted, were in port. It was even the end of May before this squadron of the enemy got fairly clear, and into the ocean; yet its getting forward was no more impeded than its first departure, and M. De la Motte Piquet was suffered to pursue his voyage without the least attempt being made to

intercept him, though it was notorious that his junction with M. D'Estaing would give the French a decided superiority over Vice-Admiral Byron.

"In March, the Channel fleet was put under the command of Sir Charles Hardy. The intentions of Spain towards England were then well known to Government, and the junction that was afterwards effected between the French and Spanish fleets was naturally to be dreaded; yet, instead of making the necessary exertion to send ships to sea early enough to prevent M. D'Orvilliers sailing from Brest, we were not in a condition to oppose him even so late as the 4th of June, when he sailed to join the Spaniards. The first Lord of the Admiralty had wisely contrived to divide the force of the home fleet precisely at this critical period. He sent Vice-Admiral Arbuthnot, with five sail of the line, to America, where the absence of the enemy (who, it was known, was to sail for the West Indies) would render his arrival at that time unnecessary; and Vice-Admiral Darby was detached, with twelve ships to escort him to sea. By this means Sir Charles Hardy could not sail till rejoined by Darby, and his departure was delayed till the 17th of June. Even when he did sail from Spithead, it did not appear from his conduct that he

had any orders to proceed to the coast of Cape Finisterre, to endeavour to disappoint the junction of the enemy's fleet. Sir Charles Hardy's fleet, when he sailed from Spithead, consisted of thirty-one or thirty-two sail (it was afterwards reinforced to thirty-seven); had he been ordered to proceed immediately to the southward, he might have fallen in with the French squadron in the interval between the 17th of June and 17th of July. The attempt, far from being attended with any risk, must have been successful, considering the strength of his squadron and of that under D'Orvilliers. The consequences of this neglect were, that a trade of infinite concern to the commerce of this country was confined by the enemy's forces in the ports of Portugal till the winter months; that the French and Spanish fleets rode triumphant in the Channel, while the fleet of England fled before them; that our coast was insulted; that the Ardent was taken off the very port of Plymouth, and that a British trader was suffered to be captured by a French frigate, in sight of our fleet, without the Admiral's daring to venture even to offer it protection.

"When D'Orvilliers and Cordova were first off Plymouth, Sir Charles Hardy was to the westward of Scilly. Why he was there was a

mystery to the world. It was afterwards said he had been taught to believe that several of the French ships had been under a necessity of putting into Ferrol and Corunna for the recovery of their sick, and that the combined fleets were separated; that his staying to the westward was with a view of interrupting D'Orvilliers on his return. This will appear from the correspondence between him and the Admiralty. What is certain is, that he was seized with astonishment on receiving information that the enemies' fleets were in the Channel. He called a council of flag-officers; he received several dispatches from ministers, and the result was, that he fled for safety to Spithead. The very hard easterly winds that came on had not permitted the enemy's fleet, either by anchoring, or by press of sail, to preserve their easting, and of course they drove down the Channel. In a few days the wind came round to the west, and Sir Charles Hardy profited by it to run up the Channel. In doing this, he came in sight of the enemy; they pursued, but were not able to bring him to action. Arrived at Spithead, he found that place had been in the utmost alarm."*

Here, the Admiral states the measures adopted in anticipation of the French making a descent

* See page 243 of this volume.

upon our coast; he then proceeds—"Several very old ships, and some that had been returned as altogether worn out, were put forward. The First Lord of the Admiralty evading, by false appearances, the claims for effectual exertions pressed upon him by this shameful event, and the disgraceful figure to which the indignant seamen and officers were compelled to submit. The names of those old ships were, the Blenheim, the Amelia, the Arrogant, the St. Albans, and the Isis. The two last were just arrived from the West Indies, scarcely in a condition to swim; the two first had been refused by Admiral Keppel the year before; the Arrogant was altogether unfit for service.

"The only additional force which the Commander-in-chief of the British fleet found to console him after this inglorious retreat was the Jupiter, and another ship of fifty guns. However, with this supposed reinforcement, he was ordered to expedite his return to sea. His speedy departure was so much insisted upon, that he was directed to be satisfied with six or eight weeks' provision, though three months' or more is the usual proportion. Yet, notwithstanding all this affected appearance of dispatch, with which the present First Lord of the Admiralty has so often covered his real neglect, Sir Charles Hardy was not at sea till the first week

in October; and almost immediately again we find him in Torbay, where five weeks were wasted in inaction, and that time lost which should have been employed in refitting and equipping for foreign service.

"At this time the state of the enemy's fleet was well known. The sickness continued to rage with great violence, and their repairs went on slowly. Orders were, indeed, sent to Brest, for a small detachment, under Mons. Treville, to strive to intercept the English East India fleet, and some few ships were sent to protect a convoy which they expected from their own West India Islands; but it was evident that they could not attempt to put again to sea in any force. Had the business of the Admiralty Board been directed by skill or wisdom, this situation of the enemy would have been turned to profit. Small detachments might have been kept cruising; but the great object should have been to refit and equip the fleet, so as to be able to supply the several pressing services that required immediate attention. But, the system of deception was not to be remitted; the nation was to be amused with a vain, empty parade; and the Parliament, on its meeting, was to be taught to believe that the English fleet were masters of the Channel.

1780.

"The beginning of this campaign is distinguished by the same neglect to watch the port of Brest that has uniformly marked the administration of the First Lord of the Admiralty with ignorance and criminality. No less than three separate armaments were suffered to sail from that port before the end of April, unwatched and unmolested; two of them were known to be destined for the West Indies, yet no exertions were made to send adequate detachments with proper dispatch, either to pursue them, or to counteract their operations when arrived there.

"On the 4th of February, De Guichen put to sea with seventeen sail of the line, nine frigates, and a large convoy of transports. The only attempt we heard of to counteract his designs, was the appointment of a squadron of six sail of the line, to be commanded by Commodore Walsingham. Had this force been sent out at the time it was appointed, it might, when joined by Rear-Admiral Parker's ships, have prepared a sufficient strength for Sir George Rodney, on his arrival to oppose the enemy, with a certainty of success. As Mons. De Guichen was encumbered with such a number of transports, their ships, sailing without a convoy, must have outrun him a considerable length of time; but the Admiralty, under the usual appearance of hurry

and dispatch, detained Commodore Walsingham in the Channel till full six weeks after Mons. De Guichen had arrived at Martinique. On the 13th of April, he left Spithead, in complete order, with a fair wind; but he was soon stopped by the Aurora frigate, and returned to Torbay, where he remained till the 29th of May.

"Towards the latter end of April, Mons. De Tourney sailed from Brest, with six or seven sail of the line, conveying 6000 French troops to America. Ministers had early notice of the equipping of this armament, and it was detained, by contrary winds, long after the French had published its destination.

"A month before it sailed, Admiral Digby returned from Gibraltar, having had the good fortune to fall in with a convoy for the East Indies, unlooked-for and unexpected, and to take the Prothee man-of-war, and four or five trading ships. After his return, the only ships that were taken from the grand fleet, which before his sailing with Sir George Rodney consisted of forty-six sail, were, five under Commodore Walsingham, ready for the West Indies; two detached to the Islands, without convoy; six under Admiral Graves, fitted for America; and four employed in different services. The remaining ships, therefore, amounted to twenty-four. From this number, the First Lord of the Admiralty

might have easily detached a sufficient force to prevent the sailing of Mons. de Ternay, either by reinforcing Admiral Graves, who was then detained in Cawsand Bay, which might have been done with five coppered ships, and ordering him off Brest to watch the motions of the French commander; or, by ordering a proper force under some other commander to blockade the Port of Brest, and prevent his sailing. Twelve ships would have been sufficient for this purpose, and Admiral Graves might have proceeded to reinforce Admiral Arbuthnot, and prepare him, in case of Mons. de Ternay's escaping out to sea. It will appear from the then state of the fleet, he could easily have accomplished either or both of these schemes; the neglect of which laid the foundation of all the last year's disgraces in America.

"With equal neglect and inattention was Don Solano permitted to sail from Cadiz on the 28th of April, with twelve ships of the line, and a large convoy of troops for the West Indies. It may be said we could not expect to find ships sufficient for all these services. But the crime of the First Lord of the Admiralty consisted in not attending to some of them, though at this time, as the detachments under Graves and Walsingham had not sailed, he had near forty sail of the line lying idle in the ports of England.

"After the detachment for foreign service, the next great object should have been to prevent the junction of the home fleets of the enemy, as the only measure from which we could hope for success. As early as the month of May, the French began to detach for Cadiz. They continued to do so with success from Toulon and the other ports during that and the following month, and in the beginning of July we find the united fleet cruising in force off the coast of Portugal. On our side, not a single attempt was made to oppose their junction or interrupt their cruise.

"Sir Charles Hardy having died at Portsmouth about the middle of May, Admiral Geary was called upon to take the chief command. It was the 8th of June before he was enabled to sail with twenty-two or twenty-three sail of the line.

"As the French and Spanish were ordered, as fast as they refitted, to rendezvous at Cadiz, it was evident to every one, except, perhaps, the First Lord of the Admiralty, that from thence they meant to enter on their summer service. The obvious measure, therefore, for the Admiralty to have embraced, was to have detached early to the coast of Spain, to annoy the enemy in their junction, or at least to have ordered Admiral Geary, on his first sailing, to proceed

immediately to the southward for that purpose. When his cruise was nearly half over, he was, indeed, ordered to detach; but it then proved useless.

"This neglect, joined to other circumstances equally marked with ignorance and criminality, led to an event at once disgraceful to our arms, and destructive to our trade. The Admiralty were possessed of the clearest and most distinct intelligence that the enemy's fleet were at Cadiz, and at times at sea in those latitudes, for the purpose of annoying the British trade. Yet they sent orders to Captain Moubray, who was to convoy the East and West India trade, to rendezvous at Madeira, the track of all others the most dangerous, and which, in that position of the enemy, could not have been marked out but by infatuation and madness. It will appear that Admiral Geary saw Captain Moubray and his convoy, and he stood as far to the westward as Moubray was ordered to stand. Yet, it seems, no orders were given him to see that valuable and important fleet so far safe; and as to his doing it himself, when he saw them, he might not have been prepared so to do from the state of his water and provisions. The obvious consequences, which were dreaded by every officer of experience, from these extraordinary and cri-

mi nal arrangements actually took place. Don Cordova sailed from Cadiz with twenty-two sail of Spanish and nine of French men of war. On the 19th of August he intercepted Captain Moubray, and carried upwards of fifty of his convoy safe into port.

" At the end of August, Admiral Geary returned to port for water and provisions, after a cruise, during which it does not appear that he was directed to take any one proper step, either to defend our own trade, or in any shape to annoy the enemy. Some of the ships were reported to stand in need of re-fitting; but their repairs, instead of being carried on with a view to the service, were made subservient to an object at this time much more essential in the eyes of the Government. Some of the largest three-deckers were sent to refit in Plymouth Sound, at an alarming risk, but evidently for the purpose of aiding the election at Plymouth, by paying the crews there. Vice-Admiral Darby was set up for that town by Government—a situation as new to him as the command of the fleet, to which he was appointed on the resignation of Admiral Geary. At the same time, the frigates from the northern stations were collected in the Downs, for the sole purpose of aiding Government in the election at Sandwich, &c. &c.

"On the resignation of Admiral Geary, the nation saw a fresh instance of the detestation in which the conduct of the present First Lord of the Admiralty is held by the service over which he presides: the chief command was proved to be considered both as an object of disgrace and terror. With much difficulty a person was found to accept it: Admiral Barrington, in particular, though he consented to serve in a subordinate station, refused to run the risk of the chief command, and in consequence of this refusal, was ordered to strike his flag.* The person on whom the command was at length placed, was an honest and a good man, but was never looked up to in the profession, and never

* The following letter corroborates this assertion :—

"ADMIRAL THE HON. SAMUEL BARRINGTON TO ADMIRAL KEPPEL.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Rogers, I conclude, has informed you of the letter I wrote to the Admiralty, declining to command the fleet, as Admiral Geary's state of health would not permit him to go to sea; that I was ready to serve under any superior, *except one*;* and if that interfered with their arrangements, I was equally desirous to strike my flag, to make way for a junior, for the good of H. M. service. In consequence of which, I have their permission, have struck my flag, and shall go to my brother's,† at Beckett, in a few days. Darby will sail with the direction of the fleet, which seems at present in no small confusion. Several ships are gone, and three more are going to Plymouth to be manned; but how that is to be accomplished I know not. Adieu, my dear Sir, and believe me ever, yours most faithfully,

"SAML. BARRINGTON."

* Sir Hugh Palliser. † Viscount Barrington.

before trusted with any command of importance or difficulty.

"About the 27th of October, Admiral Darby sailed from Torbay. The object of this cruise was never understood, as it was chiefly off Cape Finisterre and Portugal. The combined fleet of the enemy at Cadiz amounted at this time to about fifty sail of the line, besides frigates, under the command of Monsieur D'Estaing. Admiral Darby's cruise continued during the months of October, November, and December —the Admiralty falling into the same error it had so fatally committed at the conclusion of the last campaign—that of wasting the time which might have been employed for re-equipments and foreign detachments. To what end the cruise was spun out so long remains with the First Lord of the Admiralty to explain. It could not have been with any view to the combined fleets; for, when Admiral Darby's look-out ships discovered them at two different periods— on the 1st and 6th of December, he did not make the least attempt either to discover their force, or to try what could be done against them by his own squadron, which then consisted of twenty ships of the line, five frigates, and five fire-ships and cutters. Admiral Darby, in the House of Commons, denied his having seen the enemy

at all during the cruise; but the clearest evidence to the contrary will be found in the paper marked No. 3, and it must be left to be decided between him and the First Lord of the Admiralty, whether his precipitate retreat up the Channel was in consequence of orders, or of the Admiral's own decision on the spot. The fleet which he saw proved to be that of Monsieur D'Estaing, escorting De Guichen's returned ships with the trade from the West Indies.

"The business of Paul Jones happened at the latter end of this year. If it should appear essential to enter into it, the papers in the opposite column, if granted, will throw a proper light upon the subject.* In general, it may be said, that the Admiralty had information of Paul Jones, commander of a small squadron of American and French cruisers, being upon the North coast a considerable time, without any proper measures being pursued by the Admiralty to secure the safety of the English trade or the honour of the nation; on the contrary, the Serapis, of 44 guns, Captain Peirson, and others

* In the column assigned to papers "to be called for," the following are mentioned as relating to Paul Jones:—

"Letters received by Mr. Stephens at the Admiralty, from Ireland and the North coast, upon the arrival of Paul Jones in those seas."

"Letters from Captain Peirson, of the Serapis, to Mr. Stephens, informing him of his action with Paul Jones, and the capture of the ships under his command."

of the King's ships under his command, were suffered to be taken by the American Commodore, and to be carried into the ports of Holland.

"The requisite papers in the other column, marked 9, will serve to shew what ships might have been sent into the North Sea; and particularly whether the Edgar, of 74 guns, might not have been more properly directed there than to the Downs.

1781.

"The first thing observable in the naval transactions of this year, is, that when Ministers had determined upon making reprisals on the Dutch, they neglected to send beforehand a proper force to the Texel, for the purposes of intimidating the Dutch into pacific measures, or to distress them in the case of war. They had sufficient opportunities to make themselves acquainted with the strength of that river, and particularly by means of the Captain of the Serapis. A successful stroke, in the outset of that politic quarrel, might have rendered it unnecessary to divert so large a force from other objects, as has been since employed to watch the mouth of the Texel.

"Before Admiral Darby had returned to port at the conclusion of last year, preparations were set on foot for the relief of Gibraltar. As the operations of the succeeding campaign depended

upon the early performance of this service, no judge could have doubted but that, during Darby's absence at sea, the store-ships would have been loaded and got ready at Spithead, and the victuallers in equal forwardness. But to the utter astonishment of the nation, it was the 13th of March before Admiral Darby sailed from Spithead; yet not even after this delay of ten weeks, had orders been sent to the victuallers to come round from Ireland to the Channel, where they would have been taken up by the fleet, in its direct way to the Straits. Instead of this, the Admiral was ordered to stand to the coast of Ireland, where he was detained till the 29th, to the evident ruin of the service. The consequences which followed from these unaccountable delays, were—1st, That Admiral Darby lost the very probable chance of seeing the Spanish fleet before their return to Cadiz. 2ndly, That Mons. De la Motte Piquet was encouraged to slip out of Brest with the squadron that captured the St. Eustatia convoy, and enabled to return with his prizes in safety to Brest. 3rdly, That Mons. De Grasse sailed unmolested with the armaments for the East and West Indies.

"I. Admiral Darby sailed from Spithead the 13th of March; the Spanish fleet did not put into Cadiz till the 27th of that month.

"II. On Admiral Darby's return from Gibraltar, cruisers saw one or two of De la Motte Piquet's ships returning to port.

"III. De Grasse sailed about the 20th of March, and crossed the course which Admiral Darby should have steered.

"Admiral Darby, on his arrival off Cape St. Vincent, found that the enemy's fleet was in port, and that the Straits were open to him. He therefore proceeded to the relief of the garrisons of Gibraltar and Minorca. Had there been the least wisdom or foresight in the Admiralty, they would have prepared for Darby's being unopposed, and would have given him orders to dispatch a considerable force to the West Indies. To the neglect of this essential measure, which, a month before the time of Mr. Darby's sailing, must have pressed upon them so importunately, as Mons. de Guichen was then known to have proceeded to the West Indies, we are to impute the ineffectual opposition made by Sir Samuel Hood to that officer's entering Martinique, and giving so decided a superiority to the fleet of the enemy in those seas. Had Hood been enabled, by such a reinforcement, to defeat the French Admiral, when he fell in with him on his first appearance off Point Salines, (which, as it appears from his account, a few

ships would have enabled him to do,) the superiority of the French navy, to which all the subsequent disasters in America are to be attributed, would have been timely destroyed.

"Upon Vice-Admiral Darby's sailing, in March, for the relief of Gibraltar, Vice-Admiral Parker was commissioned to take upon him the command of the ships that remained in port. Everything at this time conspired to inculcate the necessity of hastening the refittal of those ships. The absence of Darby left the Channel open, and valuable convoys were daily expected. At the same time it was known that De la Motte Piquet was ready for sea at Brest, with six sail of the line and two frigates, destined for some secret service. With this force, he actually, on the 26th of April, fell in with the St. Eustatia convoy, off the coast of Ireland, captured twenty of the merchant ships, and returned safe with them to port, being so anxious to secure his prizes before Darby's return, that he suffered Commodore Hotham, with six of the transports, to escape.

"It will appear from the state of the ships then remaining in port, that a squadron of at least eight sail of the line, and two fifties, might have been fitted out with the greatest facility, and sent to sea by the 1st of April :—

Ships.	*Guns.*	
Victory	100	These ships were coppered, and might have gone to sea ten days after Admiral Darby had sailed from Spithead.
Princess Amelia .	80	
Sultan	74	
Buffalo	60	
Belleisle	64	Just returned from the East Indies; manned, and only wanting stores and provisions. The two last had been commissioned some time before the fleet, under Mr. Darby, sailed. The others had been in commission above a twelvemonth, and might have been manned from the Rippon and the Asia, they lying in the Downs.
Prothee	64	
Agamemnon . . .	64	
or		
Africa	64	
Berwick	74	This ship might have been taken for a short cruise in the Channel during Mr. Darby's absence, but she was sent, as Captain Stewart's ship, to his command at Leith.
Portland	50	At Portsmouth; manned, and fit for service.
Leander	50	

"Had this squadron been fitted and sent to sea by the time it might have been sent, instead of De la Motte Piquet's capturing the St. Eustatia convoy, he might have been taken himself, and, with his ships, carried into our ports. Of

Vice-Admiral Parker's abilities to effect that, or any other important service, the nation has had honourable proof.

"But it was not until after this disgraceful blow was struck, that the Admiralty thought of preparing the force of which they were possessed. Then, as is always their practice when any disastrous event attracts the attention of the public to that department, all was hurry, and an appearance of dispatch.

"Admiral Parker, who, till then, had been permitted to stay in town on his own private affairs, was hurried down to Plymouth, to superintend the equipment. On the 20th of May, he sailed from that port, with four sail of the line, a fifty-gun ship, and a frigate, for St. Helen's, where Darby also arrived on the 21st. Here Vice-Admiral Parker remained till the 1st of June, when he sailed to the eastward. The object of his cruise was to protect the Northern and Baltic trade. The squadron under his command was by degrees increased to five sail of the line, one fifty, two forties, and three frigates. With these, as he was bringing in the trade, he fell in with a Dutch squadron, escorting a large convoy, on the Dogger bank. It appears by his public letters, that they were *much* superior in number to what he expected from the information conveyed

to him by the Admiralty. It is also pretty well understood that he had repeatedly complained to that Board of the bad state of the ships under his command; that he represented their inadequacy to the exigencies of the service he was employed on, and begged for reinforcements. It is, further, pretty generally known, that either no attention was paid to his representations, or that the orders for reinforcing him were so long delayed that they might as well have been withheld entirely. The Berwick, indeed, fortunately joined him the day before the action, but the Sampson and two frigates, which lay at Gunfleet, did not reach him till five days after.

"If his letters, with the answers, are produced, it will appear that the Admiralty, instead of dispatching these ships to him immediately, and by a direct order to their Captains, sent powers to him, then on the coast of Norway, to order them to come to him. Were it not for this absurd and unaccountable delay, of sending first to him off the coast of Norway, and then making him send back again to the Gunfleet, they would have arrived several days before the action. It is also to be observed that the Vigilant had been lying in the Downs five weeks, well manned, and fit for service. Had he received these reinforcements in time, he would have reduced the

power of Holland at one blow. To his own personal exertions, and to the bravery of his officers, the nation is indebted for the return of the Dutch into port, instead of proceeding to the Baltic. By this, they might have been disappointed of naval stores, if the neutral bottoms had not so amply assisted them. The First Lord of the Admiralty has left nothing untried to silence the Vice-Admiral's complaints, and to prevent these transactions from being made known to the public.

" In considering the transactions of the Channel fleet, we shall find the same culpable neglect to guard against the junction of the French and Spanish fleets, that has been noticed in all the former campaigns. Not a single step was taken to prevent their junction, though the preparations in Brest and Cadiz to effect it were publicly known, and the time of their sailing announced in all the foreign gazettes. It does not appear that the Admiralty had even a cruiser employed to watch them, or apprise Government of their motions.

" When Admiral Darby put to sea, in July, the object of his sailing was to escort Admiral Digby, with three sail of the line, for North America. After he had accomplished this service, he remained cruising off Cape Finisterre, till he was informed by accident, not by any of

his own look-out ships, or by any of his Majesty's vessels, that the combined fleet was within him to the north-east, steering for the English Channel.

"From the conduct of the Admiralty, on this occasion, it will appear evident, either that they were totally ignorant of this junction of the enemy, and of their proceedings, or that they wilfully deceived, as well, their own Commander-in-chief as the nation.

"On the 27th of August, Lord Shuldham, commanding at Plymouth, wrote to acquaint the merchants of Bristol, that he had received information that the combined fleets of the enemy were seen in latitude 46° north, and longitude 10° 10′ west, steering north-east. Information was, at the same time, given to the public, that the Alert cutter, Captain Walker, had fallen in with them off Scilly, on the 21st. Alarmed at this intelligence, the Mayor of Bristol applies to the Admiralty. The answer he received from the Board was, 'that their Lordships have reason to conclude that the intelligence had not the least foundation; that the reason of Admiral Darby's return to Torbay was to take on board such refreshments as the fleet was in want of, but that he would return to sea without loss of time, to cruise for the homeward-bound Jamaica and

Leeward Island fleets, the protection of which was one of the grand objects of his instructions.' A few days proved that this intelligence, which the Secretary of the Admiralty is directed to contradict, was true in every part. The combined fleet rode in triumph through the Channel. The observation, therefore, that it is natural to make on this letter of Mr. Stephens's to the Mayor of Bristol, is, that the First Lord of the Admiralty audaciously and criminally attempted to betray the commerce of this country into a dangerous security, and fallaciously encouraged individuals to risk their property and throw it into the mouth of the enemy, in order for a moment to screen his own guilt in having taken no measures to obtain information of the motions of the enemy."

On the 18th of July, Parliament was prorogued. Ministers had been daily becoming more unpopular, and the recess did not tend to check the feelings of distrust and aversion with which they were regarded by the great body of the nation. Their opponents, in the meantime, were not idle. While "Lord North was giving balls atBushy, and his Majesty settling a royal hunt at Basingstoke,"* the opponents of the ad-

* Private letter from the Earl of Pembroke to the Marquess of Rockingham.

ministration were maturing their plan for displacing the ministers to whom they imputed the loss and the disgrace which had been brought upon the country. In these consultations Keppel frequently shared. Towards the autumn, he was summoned to the sick-bed of his brother, General Keppel. On the 21st of October, he writes to Lady Albemarle—"My situation at this moment it is unnecessary to describe to you. My poor brother is indeed very ill, and in a most critical state. I am inclined to hope he is somewhat better, though others about me have their doubts; his pulse is moderate, but he has not the power of speech, except a syllable now and then. I think this night will determine much." The General rallied for a time, but only to sink into the grave, from a lingering illness, on the 1st of March of the following year.*

When Parliament re-assembled on the 27th of November, Admiral Keppel was again in his

* At the time of his death, General Keppel was Colonel of the 12th regiment of Dragoons. He was one of the most popular men of his day. One of the newspapers says of him—"He is a man that troubles himself very little with public business, but is held in the highest estimation in his profession, for his general abilities as an officer, and a most rigid and exact attention to all the parts of military discipline. He gave a signal proof of fraternal attachment on the first intimation of the charge against his brother, by resigning his staff, and all its concomitant dignities and emoluments."

place. Fox moved an amendment to the Address. In the course of his speech, he dropped an expression, complaining that the ablest naval officers were on shore. This was taken up with much violence by Lord Mulgrave, who severely attacked Fox for saying—"all the men of any naval eminence were on shore, and unemployed." Fox called out from the opposite side of the House, "No, no; those were not my words." But Lord Mulgrave persisted that they were. He also warmly defended Lord Sandwich, whose mismanagement of the navy had been animadverted upon by Fox, and further declared, that the first fleet sent out under Keppel was superior to that of the enemy.

Admiral Keppel answered Lord Mulgrave. "He reprehended him for the vehement manner in which he had seized on a hasty expression of Mr. Fox, and thundered it out as an unjust aspersion on many brave and gallant officers now fighting the battles of their country, and whom it would be base and disgraceful for any man to revile. There were officers in the service every way deserving the appointments which they held, and he knew the honourable gentleman to be incapable of insulting them; but the noble Lord had ungenerously, and, in his opinion, uncandidly, taken up an expression delivered in a

parenthesis, and to which he sincerely believed no gentleman in the House applied the meaning given to it by the noble Lord but himself.

"The noble Lord had said that the first fleet which Lord Sandwich had sent was superior to the enemy; he denied the fact—it was not true. It had been before this time advanced, and before this time contradicted. At the time of his Court-martial, he had called on the Admiralty Board to produce the official list of the strength of the French fleet, which they refused to do. "Do it yet," exclaimed Admiral Keppel with warmth—"produce that list, and do not come here hazarding assertions which, when called upon, you will not avow, and dare not, because you cannot prove!" The noble Lord had said, that the parsimony of Admiral Lord Hawke was the cause of our present weakness. He denied that also. Lord Hawke was truly, as Mr. Fox had said, the father of the British navy, and he had left the English fleet in a flourishing condition—flourishing, for a time of peace; and if the present First Lord had done his duty, if he had faithfully, and diligently applied the immense grants of Parliament to the increase of our navy, or had even ably directed, employed, and applied the naval force which he really possessed, the misfortunes of this war would never have oc-

curred. The last was the severe charge he had to bring against the noble Lord—the misapplication of the force with which he was entrusted; and if the House would call for the papers which he would point out, he pledged himself to prove to their conviction what he had averred upon his knowledge to be true."

On the 5th of December, the House went into a committee of supply. Lord Lisburne moved for 10,000 marines for the year 1782. A discussion ensued on the subject of the navy.

Mr. Hussey urged the necessity of having more landsmen on board ship, who, he said, might easily be trained to become able seamen.

Keppel said, "it was not an easy thing to make able seamen out of landsmen; but it was a most advantageous thing to have them on board, for they came up slowly and gradually to be most serviceable hands. It undoubtedly required that men should go young into the service to become able seamen. As to splitting ships' companies, and tearing from an officer the men in whom he had confidence, and who had confidence in him, and in one another, it was a thing that he would never do. He would as soon put his hand into the pocket of an officer, and rob him of his gold, as he would of the men he had bred up. This was the fault of the present Board. It was this that

had divided and distracted the navy, which had driven men into the service of foreign countries, and had dispirited those that remained. It was a thing which had never been practised in former days—in the days of that great and gallant man whom it was the fashion now to revile, but who was the father of the English navy, Lord Hawke. It had been said that in his administration our fleet was not so great as it is now. He denied the fact; it was greater. He sat with him at the Board; he knew his conduct, both in his civil and military capacity. He had left behind him a name unrivalled in the maritime records of his country. There were, indeed, about twenty bad ships; but it was a singular thing that of those appointed to parade before his Majesty,* the greater part were the ships of Lord Hawke. They remained stanch and true to their country, like the old English oak of which they were made. Lord Sandwich's foreign men of war were not made for British service."

Keppel avowed "that the Admiralty had not exerted themselves in procuring ships to be built.

* The King had recently paid a visit to Admiral Hyde Parker's fleet, on its return from a gallant but indecisive action with the Dutch fleet off the Dogger Bank. Parker was offered knighthood, but he indignantly declined it, and resigned his command in disgust. For the causes of Parker's dissatisfaction see Keppel's "Statement of Facts," from page 352 to 356 of this volume.

They had opportunities, and suffered them to escape. Perhaps it was not yet too late; but they studied and practised the most incompetent and unadvised plan, and they had, by that means, suffered the British navy to decay; and he must assert, though he did it without despondency, that we had better lie down at once, than go on without a system. It was the most melancholy part of our situation. that the navy which we did possess was not directed to an object."

On the 20th of December, Sir Grey Cooper, one of the secretaries of the Treasury, moved an adjournment. A debate ensued, in which Lord Sandwich's conduct was animadverted upon for sending Admiral Kempenfelt with twelve ships to fight twenty.

Keppel said, "Admiral Kempenfelt was a favourite with the Admiralty, and undoubtedly he deserved to be so; but still they had not given him a sufficient force. Upon the expedition from Brest to the West Indies depended the safety of our islands; and all concerns of an inferior nature ought to give way to the most pressing. The safety of our islands ought to be the principal object of our care; we should, therefore, have detached some of our force from the East to strengthen our commander before Brest, as the service he was upon was infinitely more

important than was that for which our force in the Downs was stationed. The West Indies might have been preserved. He had said before, and was ready to repeat it, that if a proper use had been made of the force which we actually had, the Compte de Rochambeau would never have been able to land in America; and consequently, the surrender of Lord Cornwallis would never have taken place. He would not say there was treachery, but there was neglect, and an evident want of naval skill in that Board. He, and he believed every man at all acquainted with the nature of a maritime war, held it to be indispensable, that where your force was inferior to that of your enemy, everything depended on the proper direction of it. It was no excuse to say, "We sent so many ships here, and so many there," enumerating a parcel of petty occasions. Lesser interests ought to sink before greater. Where the necessity pressed most, there the object should be most attended to, and the preference shewn. Admiral Kempenfelt's was a great enterprise; the object was more important than almost any other that had been attempted. It was chiefly from a wise use of our force in Europe that we were to look for success. Had the French design been frustrated on the onset, Sir George Rodney might have

taken his time in going to the West Indies. It would have been better to take some of our ships from the East, and send them to assist Mr. Kempenfelt, than that his endeavours should have failed. The noble Lord (Mulgrave) had asserted that there had been more instances of brilliant conduct in officers in this than in any preceding war. He would not then enter into a discussion of the assertion at large; it was enough for him to deny the fact. He further said, that if the inquiry was fairly proceeded upon, if all the necessary papers that might be called for were granted, he would venture to say that no friend of the First Lord of the Admiralty would have reason to boast of the result."

On the re-assembling of Parliament, Mr. Fox moved for an inquiry, first, into that "want of success which had attended our fleets during the war, more especially in the year 1781;" and that "there had been gross mismanagement in the administration of naval affairs during the year 1781." Keppel took a part in the debate. The proceedings are thus mentioned:—

ADMIRAL KEPPEL TO CAPTAIN JERVIS.

"Feb. 8, 1782.

"DEAR JERVIS,—I am much fatigued from the lateness of the business of yesterday. The matter

may be summed up very shortly. The evidence, from papers of intelligence, orders, letters, &c., was sufficient to condemn a better character than the Earl of S——h's. The proof against him was upon the table, in the face of his advocates. Lord Mulgrave, with a degree of self-sufficiency, was in front of S——h's army, stating and misstating, but not giving very substantial good reasons in favour of Lord S——h's measures. Lord Howe met the arguments of Lord Mulgrave, and opened more than he generally does. Lord North, I conceive, did not think well of the ground he was fighting upon, if I am to judge by the tenour and insufficiency of his arguments. Lord Mulgrave, having caught a little inaccuracy in Mr. Fox's sea matters, obliged me to get up. The pain I was in made me shorter than I might otherwise have been, and yet I think I forgot very little of the matter of the year 1781. Perhaps I went a little out of the way, and might, in my own opinion, have stated a few facts stronger against Lord S——h, which I omitted. I expressed myself to the Committee, that I was speaking as a professional man, that I was risking my opinion for the judgment of my profession without doors, which was of more consequence to me than gaining votes upon the question within the House. Barré spoke pointedly,

daringly, and well. Everything was on our side but numbers; and in that particular, considering the ministry, management, and delaying the papers, we had enough, I believe, to stagger the First Lord:—for, 183; against, 205. The uncertainty of the day lost us many. A little better management on our side, and less assiduity on theirs, we should have carried our question clear. Mr. Fox finished by saying, the committee had heard most distinctly the matter described and explained by two of the most experienced officers; and till others, high in rank in the profession, met their arguments, and contradicted their assertions, the Committee must all be of one opinion. He trusted, however, he should not hear them contradict the officers they had heard, because he was sure they could not.

"When I began this letter, I was only half fatigued, but when the post bell last night called for it, I was too unwell, and in too much pain, to finish it. I am now better, but yet in great pain.

"Sincerely yours,

"A. KEPPEL."

In the debates, we occasionally find Keppel taking part. In his last recorded speech in the House of Commons, reference is made to his early protégé, Adam Duncan. The Lord Advo-

cate had said that "Captain Duncan, in the course of conversation, had declared that had Rodney been sent out to reinforce Admiral Kempenfelt, it would have been highly impolitic, as his ships might have been crippled, and the object of his voyage rendered useless."

Keppel rose, in some warmth, "to answer an aspersion which seemed to be thrown out by the learned Lord, with respect to the opinion of Captain Duncan. Captain Duncan was a man of too much honour to speak a double tale, therefore he was confident the learned Lord must have misunderstood Captain Duncan, which was easily to be done, the learned Lord being ignorant of the profession. Captain Duncan had, in conversation with him, declared the reverse of what the learned Lord had asserted. There was not, he believed, a captain in the squadron of Sir George Rodney, who did not think he ought to have been sent out to join Admiral Kempenfelt. It had been declared by those in office, that the whole of the force of this country had been exerted properly; he denied the fact, for at the time of Admiral Kempenfelt's sailing, there were more than ten ships lying idle, which might have been with him; and it was a paltry excuse to say they were not ready; it was the duty of the Admiralty always to have ships

ready (but more particularly when they have such long notice as appeared in the present case) to put to sea on an emergency. With respect to the protection which ought to have been given to the Eustatia convoy, it would certainly have been an easy matter to fall in with them, for Sir George Rodney writes expressly home, that they are to be met with in latitude 49° 30′; and what does the Admiralty do in consequence of this information? After the fleet is captured, they send a frigate to cruise in 48° 30′, by which means, had they been where Sir George Rodney mentioned, the frigate, in all probability, would have missed them."

CHAPTER XI.

THE "ROCKINGHAM ADMINISTRATION" — THE "COALITION ADMINISTRATION" — DEATH AND CHARACTER OF LORD KEPPEL.

Lord North resigns—Keppel's Letter to Lord Rockingham—The "Rockingham Administration"—Keppel a member of the new cabinet—First Lord of the Admiralty—Is created a Viscount—Moves the thanks of the House of Lords to Rodney—Remarks on BREAKING the LINE—On Rodney's peerage—Letters: Lord Keppel to Lord Rockingham, Mr. Fox, and Sir John Jervis—Death of Lord Rockingham—Keppel continues in office—Horace Walpole and Lord Holland's observations thereon—Keppel resigns—He returns to the Admiralty—Breaking up of the "Coalition Administration"—Anecdote of Keppel—His death—and Character.

1782 TO 1786.

ON the 20th of March, on Lord Surrey's rising to propose an address to the King, to urge upon his Majesty a change in the Government, Lord North announced that "his Majesty's Ministers were no more." After this declaration, "the King," says Nicholls, "sent Lord Thurlow, the Chancellor, to the Marquess of Rockingham, to request his assistance in forming an administra-

tion." Lord Rockingham, who had not forgotten his treatment in the summer of 1780, nor the advice suggested by Keppel, replied, "that he was very willing to serve his Majesty, but requested the honour of being admitted to a private audience before any administration should be arranged." The answer does not seem to have pleased the King, for he instantly sent for Lord Shelburne, and offered him the post of First Lord of the Treasury. Lord Shelburne declined, and at the same time declared, "that in his judgment, no one could at present fill that situation except Lord Rockingham."*

That Lord Rockingham was looked upon as the future Premier, will appear from the following letter from Keppel, written on the day that Lord North declared the Ministry to be at an end, and before he could have known that any overture had been made to Lord Rockingham :—

ADMIRAL KEPPEL TO LORD ROCKINGHAM.

"Wednesday evening, March 20, 1782.

"DEAR LORD ROCKINGHAM,—I do not trouble you with my company, because I am not so free from pain as I was in the morning, and concluding that you have long before this been ac-

* Tomline's Life of Pitt, vol. i. p. 64.

quainted with what passed in the House of Commons this day. But as I shall not be able to be with you to-morrow until late in the evening, being obliged to be at Kingston at the Assizes, occasions my troubling you with this. It is only to repeat to your Lordship what I expressed on a former occasion—that I hoped no one thing, in which you may have me in consideration, may stand at all in the way of your arrangements. I am aware of the difficult task attending the management of the Admiralty; I think it is a situation not to be envied, in the crippled state Lord Sandwich will leave the navy in. I cannot mean by that to be understood that I am not cheerfully at your disposal. I am not likely to see your Lordship before to-morrow evening; and as it is possible you may have to converse upon naval matters, as well as others, before I see you, I venture to observe, that if flag-officers are at all your topic, that the chief of them for first service are, Sir Robert Harland, Lord Howe, Barrington, Campbell, Pigot, Parker. Some of this number will undoubtedly be considered as proper assistants at the Admiralty, whoever may be placed at the head of that Board. I will not now tire your thoughts with more; you know my readiness to join with you in any business ever so hazardous. My wishes, upon the whole, you are not unacquainted with, and

my chief desire, and principal wish, is, that you may not suffer yourself to be any ways embarrassed upon my account, and that you will believe me,

"Ever most faithfully, &c.

"A. KEPPEL."

The following list, furnished by Keppel to Lord Rockingham, has no date. It comprises the names of many who would not serve under the former Administration :—

SEA OFFICERS THAT ARE NOW ON SHORE, TO BE CALLED UPON FOR SERVICE.

Admiral Keppel—will be ready to be as useful as in his power, in any situation.

Vice-Admiral Montague,
Vice-Admiral Harland,
Vice-Admiral Lord Howe,
} to be made immediately Admirals at the main topmast-head.

Vice-Admiral Pigot.

Vice-Admiral Byron.

Barrington—should be immediately employed, and thanked for his services at St. Lucie.

Vice-Admiral Campbell
Vice-Admiral Parker,
Vice-Admiral Edwards,
} to be immediately employed.

OF ADMIRALS EMPLOYED.

Vice-Admiral Sir John Lockhart Ross—to have the command in chief on the coast of Scotland.

Vice-Admiral Kempenfelt—to continue in service.

CAPTAINS NOT SERVING AT PRESENT.

Sir John Lindsay,
Allen,
Faulkner.
Levison,
} to be noticed.

Although the King could not prevail upon Lord Shelburne to accept his offer, "he arranged the Administration with him, and then sent him to the Marquis of Rockingham, to inform him of the names of the gentlemen who were to form the cabinet, and of the different offices which they were to fill."

"No man," says Nicholls, from whom the above extract is taken, "was at that time more confidential with the Marquis of Rockingham than Admiral Keppel, who told me that Lord Rockingham himself was very averse to accept the office offered him; that the noble Lord thought that the King had manifested such personal dislike to him, by refusing him an audience, and arranging the Administration with Lord Shelburne, that, in his own opinion, he was not a fit person to be in the King's service."*

Nor would this reluctance to take office have been overcome, but for the earnest solicitations of Fox, Burke, and the Duke of Richmond. Even after he had signified his acceptance of the post of First Lord of the Treasury, the King, as if the more strongly to mark his dislike, allowed three entire days to elapse before he would see his new Minister.

The Cabinet was at length formed. The Marquis of Rockingham became the First Lord of

* Nicholl's Recollections and Reflections on the Reign of George the Third, p. 44.

the Treasury; Earl of Shelburne and Mr. Fox, Secretaries of State; Lord John Cavendish, Chancellor of the Exchequer; Duke of Grafton, Lord Privy Seal; Lord Camden, President of the Council; Duke of Richmond, Master-General of the Ordnance; General Conway, Commander-in-Chief of the Forces; Dunning, (created Lord Ashburton,) Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster; Lord Thurlow continued as Chancellor; and Admiral Keppel, (shortly afterwards created a Viscount,) held the post of First Lord of the Admiralty.

Some time prior to this arrangement, Nicholls says he had very confidential intercourse with several leaders of the Rockingham party, and availed himself of the circumstance to urge the great advantage that would be derived from a sincere union between the Rockingham and Shelburne Whigs. "When I talked on this subject with Admiral Keppel," continues Nicholls, "the answer he made me was this: 'I see the advantage of the union as much as you can do; for myself, I stand well with both parties, and am deeply interested that such a union should take place; but the Earl of Shelburne has that degree of ill-will to Mr. Burke, that no union ever can take place between the parties.'"* This opinion was too soon to be verified. The Administration,

* Nicholl's Recollections, p. 40.

consisting of five Rockingham and five Shelburne Whigs, with a Tory Lord Chancellor, was, indeed, a union only in name. Their interests and their ideas were completely at variance ; and even from the first formation of the Government, jarrings and jealousies occurred.

On the subject of his peerage, Keppel thus writes to Lord Rockingham :—

"London, 2nd April, 1782.

"My dear Marquis,—I am fatigued to a degree, and am going to bed, well contented as to my private considerations, and much obliged to you. I cannot help thinking that I ought to be well satisfied with the king's behaviour throughout this business. I need not doubt your goodness in finishing it in the properest manner, without any stipulation as to the degree of peerage, or precedency of the gentlemen of the law,* in case I am called to the House as a Baron. They have kissed hands before, and the contention might breed unpleasant disputes, which are not necessary in our present situation. Your Lordship's declaring it at St. James's, after the levée, will do no harm, as by that time the business will be over at Epsom.

"I wish I could express to you my contempt

* Dunning, created Lord Ashburton; and Norton, Lord Grantly.

at the appearances of the strength of the naval force, as it is left me by the late Admiralty.* But to complain is a want of spirit, that I shall not too much encourage. Yet the unpleasant situation of the country must employ the chief of my thoughts. Good rest to your Lordship; and believe me ever

"Most truly yours,

"A. KEPPEL.

"P.S.—I am so sleepy, I scarce know what I have wrote; and my letter is so full of blots that I am almost ashamed to send it."

On the 8th of April, Keppel was promoted to the rank of Admiral of the White; and on the 29th of the same month was created Viscount Keppel and Baron Elden, which second title he derived from his seat in Suffolk.

Lord Keppel's appointment infused a new spirit into the navy; and several distinguished officers, whom the misconduct of the late Ministry had long excluded from employment, were now restored to the service. Lord Howe, pro-

* A few months later, in a letter to General Fitzpatrick, Secretary for Ireland, Keppel writes, "our real distress for stout men, and seamen amongst them, to equip seven or eight ships of the line, is really very great. You will easily suppose my anxiety to shew to the world the exertions that have been made."—Lord Holland's MSS.

moted to the rank of Admiral of the Blue, and created a British peer, was appointed to the chief command of a powerful fleet. To Admiral the Hon. Samuel Barrington was given the command of a squadron, with which he was ordered to intercept a French convoy bound to the East Indies. Sir Robert Harland was promoted to be Admiral of the Blue, and became a Lord of the Admiralty. Admiral Sir Hyde Parker had assigned to him the chief command in the East Indies ;* and Admiral Pigot, who had been appointed a Lord of the Admiralty, and promoted to the rank of Admiral of the Blue, was sent to the West Indies, to supersede Sir George Rodney, who was considered to have acted harshly in the capture of St. Eustatia, by confiscating the property of its inhabitants.

Pigot was dispatched on the 1st of May, and could scarcely have sailed when the news of Rodney's famous victory over the Count de Grasse arrived in England. Keppel, who at once perceived the impropriety of recalling Rodney at such a moment, sent an express to stop his sailing, but it was too late; a fast-sailing cutter was then dispatched, but was also unsuccessful in overtaking him.

* He sailed on the 13th of October; but, after passing the Cape of Good Hope, was never again heard of.

It remains a matter of doubt what share, if any, Keppel had in the recall of one with whom from his earliest years he had been on terms of intimacy. The biographer of Rodney says—"There is reason to believe that Lord Keppel, who succeeded Lord Sandwich in the Admiralty, was strongly opposed to the recall of his friend Sir George Rodney, and remonstrated, in warm terms, against the measure, threatening, if it were persisted in, to resign his new appointment, from which he was solely withheld by the fear of giving umbrage in a certain high quarter."*

Keppel himself, in a letter to Captain Jervis,† alludes to Rodney's recall as if it had been the act of the Government. Be this as it may, Rodney certainly harboured no ill-will against Keppel. At the dinner given to him by the city of London, immediately on his return to England, one of the earliest toasts he proposed was "the health of his friend, Admiral Lord Keppel."

Keppel's first speech in the House of Lords was to move a vote of thanks to Rodney. "There was," said he, "little necessity for him to say much in excuse for not sooner bringing the matter forward which he should have the honour to propose, because the House, their Lordships well

* Mundy's Life of Rodney, vol. ii. p. 331.

† This letter was kindly shewn to the writer by Mr. Tucker.

knew, had not sat since the news arrived of one of the most important victories that the annals of this country had ever been distinguished by. The conduct of Sir George Rodney, in the late action in the West Indies, in point of attention, ability, and bravery, he declared, as a professional man, had not only been uncommonly brilliant, but was likely to prove of the most solid advantage to us. The noble Earl who would have been the more proper person to announce that business to the House, was too unwell to attend; but he had his full authority to declare, that, in his opinion, too much praise and too high a reward, could not be bestowed on Sir George Brydges Rodney. Considered fully, the behaviour of the Admiral all through the business deserved equally the admiration and gratitude of every man in the kingdom; the care and attention with which he watched the French fleet while in port, the activity and spirit with which he pursued them, the instant they left the harbour, and the good conduct, attention, and valour, which he exhibited in a battle, fought not for one day only, but which, from beginning to end, took up several days, and was at last crowned with the most glorious success, altogether raised his character to a degree of exaltation and eminence that few of the bravest officers employed by his Majesty had ever reached. *There might*

have been advantages derived from fortune in the event of the action, but abstracted from every consideration of that kind, Sir George Rodney had behaved so judiciously and so gallantly, that he merited much stronger eulogiums than he had it in his power to make. *No officer, however brave, could force such an opportunity* as Sir George Rodney had experienced of proving his ability. *It depended entirely on the mutual desire of the commanders of both fleets to fight fairly, and to put the strength of one squadron against the strength of the other*, so as to leave the issue of the day to the trial of skill and of conduct in the commanders, and the trial of firmness and bravery in the seamen. Such had been the manner in which the British and French fleets had meet; and Sir George Rodney, greatly to his own honour and his country's advantage, had proved himself and his seamen greatly and gloriously superior to the enemy in point of conduct, intrepidity, and spirit." He then proposed three resolutions: the first, for "thanking the Commander-in-chief; the second, for thanking Sir Samuel Hood, Admiral Drake, Commodore Affleck, Sir Charles Douglas, and the rest of the captains and officers of the fleet; and the third, for approving the conduct of the seamen, marines, and troops, on board the fleet."

The action here alluded to was that in which

the manœuvre of "breaking the line" was put into practice for the first time. Since Keppel's affair in 1778, no less than eight general engagements* had been conducted upon the only mode of attack then known, and one and all had been attended with the same indecisive results. Of this number, three had been fought by Rodney himself, and that, too, after Clerk's most important system had been submitted to, and fully approved of, by that Admiral. Lord Keppel seems to have been aware that Sir George Rodney had not adopted the established mode of warfare, but, unable to account for the success which attended this deviation, he attributed to accident what was the effect of design. Hence his expression, that "There might have been advantages derived from fortune in the event of the action."

Lord Keppel's unconsciousness of the mode in which the victory was achieved, is further shewn by the declaration, that "No officer, however

* Admiral Byron, off Grenada, July 6, 1779.
Admiral Rodney, off Martinico, April 17, 1780. May 15, 1780. May 19, 1780.
Admiral Arbuthnot, off the Chesapeak, March 16, 1781.
Admiral Hood, off Port Royal, April 29, 1781.
Admiral Parker, off the Dogger Bank, August 5, 1781.
Admiral Graves, off the Chesapeak, Sept. 5, 1781.

brave, could force such an opportunity;" and in the assumption that it was "the mutual desire of both fleets to pit the strength of one squadron against the strength of the other."*

Had either Lord Keppel, or those whom he addressed, been acquainted with the true causes of the victory of the 12th of April, they would have known that it was "in the power of an officer to force such an opportunity;" and that whatever might have been the desire of the French Admiral, he had no option of avoiding a general engagement, but by the sacrifice of a considerable portion of his fleet without a struggle.

If the manœuvre of cutting the line in twain had been known at this period, Lord Keppel would have scarcely risked his professional reputation by the observations he made, and if he had, his political enemies would not have failed to turn the admission to his discredit as an officer.

This circumstance is an answer to those who would draw invidious comparisons between the professional merit of Keppel and Rodney, and such

* "Breaking the line" appears to combine the same principle as that involved in the discovery of Epaminondas, in military tactics, by which an equal or an inferior line of infantry could compel an enemy to engage.

other Admirals, as, after the 12th of April, 1782, had the advantage of fighting under an improved system of tactics.*

A short time afterwards, it was proposed to bestow a pension of 2000*l.* a-year upon Sir George Rodney for his own life and the lives of his two sons. On this occasion, Keppel again spoke in very warm terms of Sir George Rodney's conduct. "He was sensible," he said, "that it would be unnecessary for him to take up any of their Lordship's time in stating either the merit or the gallantry of his successes, as a ground for a motion which he proposed for an address to the King, approving of the grant. Lord Sandwich, in reply, said, that a report had gone abroad, that Sir George Rodney was to be made a peer. If such were the case, his Majesty surely would be advised to place him above the rank of a Baron. Were he in a situation to counsel the Crown, he should advise the creating him an Earl or a Viscount, at least. Lord Sandwich had previously, in a private letter to Rodney,† called his attention to what he intended saying on this

* On the 23rd of March, 1842, Sir James Graham said, in the House of Commons, that when "Keppel claimed the merit of Lord Howe's victory for his own administration, Lord North replied—'It is true you have triumphed; but you have triumphed with Philip's troops.'" It was evidently not to Howe, but to Rodney, that Sir James intended to allude. That Admiral, however, was more indebted for his victory to Mr. Clerk, the author of "Naval Tactics," than to either Sandwich or Keppel.

† Mundy's Life of Rodney, vol. ii. p. 306.

occasion; hence it would appear that he wished to produce an impression on Rodney's mind, that a higher title would have been awarded him, if he had been in Keppel's situation. That Keppel did endeavour to procure for Rodney a grade superior to that of Baron, is shewn by the following letter:—

LORD KEPPEL TO LORD ROCKINGHAM.

"May 29, 1782.

"DEAR LORD ROCKINGHAM,—I could scarcely get a fair occasion to bring in the promotion of Sir George Rodney to a peerage, except by saying that Lord Sandwich had reproached Government with affront and neglect of Sir George, in not advising the Crown to create him a peer, with two thousand a year, to enable him, after his great services, to live with ease and honour. His Majesty's answer did not tend to agree with Lord Sandwich: he said he believed Sir George would be happy enough with the peerage as it was. It really looked to me as if he had an aversion to granting the advanced rank of Viscount. I ventured to go no further, only in saying that my Viscount rank would have been much at Sir George Rodney's service. His Majesty said I was very correct; and so that matter ended. You must talk your difficulties over; and Palliser's situation must be decided upon, or he must for ever remain. His removal cannot, ought not, to depend upon me; but it is really

impossible I should do business with the present Governor of the Hospital, and therefore I must entreat that it is either determined he shall be removed, or that he shall not. I wont trouble your Lordship further. Lord Shelburne is in town. I am, sincerely, &c. "KEPPEL."

Any steps that might have been taken relative to the removal of Sir Hugh Palliser were put an end to by the unexpected death of Lord Rockingham.

LORD KEPPEL TO CAPTAIN JERVIS.

"Admiralty Office, May 1st, 1782.

"MY DEAR SIR,—You may be sure I shall at all times be happy when I am able to comply with any desire of yours; but, in truth, your request relative to dispensing with your young officer's time, I cannot, even for such a friend as yourself, break the rule. At the beginning of the war, I was an advocate for the shorter time of service; but so many young men are now come forward by a regular servitude, that to break through the regulation at this period would be injurious to them. Your young man shall be commissioned the moment after he has served his time.

"I have so much at this moment to do, that I can say little else at present than that I am

"Most truly yours,

"KEPPEL."

On the 19th of April, Captain Jervis fought a gallant action with the Pégase, a French ship of seventy-four guns and seven hundred men. He came up with her at one o'clock at night, and after a close engagement of three quarters of an hour, compelled her to strike. He himself was wounded.* Admiral Barrington, to whose squadron he belonged, in giving an account of this action, says:—"My pen is not equal to the praise that is due to the good conduct, bravery, and discipline of Captain Jervis." Keppel was highly gratified with his friend's gallantry, wrote him a warm letter of thanks for his conduct, and, soon after, procured him the red ribbon, an honour which he, Lord Keppel, conceived to be very inferior to his merits.

LORD KEPPEL TO CAPTAIN JERVIS.

"May 6th, 1782.

"I WROTE immediately on receiving your letter to the Surveyor of the Navy, upon the subject of the scroll and small figure-head for the Foudroyant; and I have seen the surveyor this morning, who is much disposed to follow the requests of one so reasonable as he always

* From letters the writer has seen, he believes that Jervis's wound, on this occasion, was in the eye.

finds you; and therefore I suppose he will accommodate you to the utmost.

"I very truly hope that you continue getting sleep; it must be refreshing, whilst it is absolutely necessary to your comfort. You are the best judge how able your surgeon is to the care of your wound, and whether your being in town for better advice may not be desirable. I wish you to consider this with your friends about you. I must hope to see you when your wound is well enough for me to attend you to St. James's. You may be sure I shall keep you as short a time as suits your convenience. I do assure you that there are many ladies, and handsome ones, who interest themselves greatly in your welfare; and they expect to have a sight of you when you will allow of it.

"Our friend Barrington I have made much pleased with the appointing of his first officer to a command; and I think he must find himself happy, and at his ease, since Lord Howe's being with the squadron. Our honest friend has been indeed lucky in the success you have so greatly contributed to render brilliant.*

"I am not without further hopes of favour-

* Admiral Barrington had just succeeded in capturing two men of war and eleven transports and store-ships, out of a convoy of eighteen, bound to the East Indies. The Pégase, taken by the Foudroyant, Captain Jervis, was one of the convoy.

able events, but a little patience is necessary. The accounts from the other side of the water encourage a belief that Sir George Rodney has had some success against the French convoy that sailed for Brest, in February last, for Martinique. We have no office letters that yet can justify our saying we believe the accounts, though the dates will agree well enough.

"I am, very sincerely, ever most truly, &c.

"KEPPEL."

LORD KEPPEL TO THE RIGHT HON. CHARLES JAMES FOX.

"DEAR MR. FOX,—I have directed copies to be made of the instructions sent to the officers in the East and West Indies; and in the strict observance of them, Admiral Pigot will of course be dispatching many of the ships of his fleet to Europe. If the French keep ships of the line in the West Indies, our Admiral will, of course, do the same; otherwise, should the French send the whole of the line of battle ships to Europe, no ships of the line will be left on our part, nor other force than what has ever been usual in times of peace. The force in the East Indies, by the latest instructions, was to be reduced to five ships of two decks; I hope, however, that the East India

Company may be satisfied with one ship of the line and a frigate or two. I don't find that the French ships at Toulon are yet disarming. If they are not, it may be proper to have some watch upon them. The orders for putting the French King's officer in possession of the islands of St. Pierre and Miguelon, and what relates to the French fishing at Newfoundland, conformable to the preliminary articles of the peace, have been dispatched to Portsmouth, and the frigates will sail as soon as the wind permits, as will the other frigate from Plymouth, for the West Indies, with the permission, on the part of France, to the English ships entering and landing the produce of the islands, that are by the preliminaries surrendered back to the English.

"I am, dear sir, &c.

"KEPPEL."

LORD KEPPEL TO CAPTAIN JERVIS.

"May 24th, 1782.

"DEAR CAPTAIN JERVIS, — I have many worthy friends who interest themselves for Mr. Jackson's continuance in his situation at the Admiralty; but, to my way of judging, I cannot comply. The question itself of his retiring, I did not take up without considering it well over, un-

prejudiced, and indeed unadvised; and I felt it necessary for conducting the business of the Admiralty in my charge. Mr. Jackson, I hope, does not consider his removement as personal, or to the prejudice of his character as a man of honour and probity. I declare against conveying such an idea to the world; however, I find the time pressing to put a conclusion to the business. I have read over more than once the statement and different settlements to and with some of his predecessors. I cannot reason upon money transactions in such a business. I should be ashamed to be a party to anything that can have the appearance of a bargain; I don't, therefore, find myself able, with consistency, to say more than my intention to order 400*l.* per annum, and the 80*l.* or 100*l.* a-year in addition, to defray the taxes, to hold till he is otherwise provided for. I hope this matter will here close, and that you will excuse the trouble you have had in it.

"Sincerely yours, &c.,

"KEPPEL."

LORD KEPPEL TO LORD ROCKINGHAM.

"May 24th, 1782.

"DEAR LORD ROCKINGHAM,—I trust you know that you can have no serious wish that

does not immediately become an object to me to join you in; and therefore, when your inclination is determined to hope for Sir Harry Featherston's request, I shall of course drop my own claims, if, as First Lord of the Admiralty, I had any one to recommend. I feel awkward without a sea officer in Parliament. After saying this, it ends, and you have but to answer Sir Harry Featherston as you like. But I protest I do not know how to reply to Sir John Carter's letter, in any other way—if at all—than nearly in the words upon the paper enclosed.

"I hope you are none the worse for your sitting last night.

"I am, dear Marquis,

"Ever sincerely yours,

"KEPPEL.

"P.S.—Pray let me hear from you, and send the paper back altered as you may fancy."

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

"Admiralty Office, May 26th, 1782.

"DEAR MARQUIS,—I have no doubt of the propriety of raising Commodore Affleck to the rank of Rear-Admiral; but whilst I should be doing what I like in that measure, some difficulty and trouble would arise to myself; such as either

promoting Tom Taylor,* or leaving him out. To mark him in the favourable promotion of two or three would, I fear, be odious; the making him in a large number, less censurable; leaving him out altogether, rather ungrateful for past services to us when in opposition.

"I rejoice with you on the further success of the fleet in the West Indies, and I am sure Lady Rockingham will not be displeased at what has rejoiced me much—that our little witness and midshipman is the very Captain Courteney† who brings Sir G. Rodney's second despatches. I can hardly describe to you my feelings at finding him alive after supposing him drowned.

"Sir H. Featherston was at Greenwich to see me yesterday, but I was too ill to see anybody not upon public business. Mr. Brett would inform him that I had wrote to Sir Samuel Hood's son (who wished to propose

* Captain Taylor was, at Keppel's request, appointed a Lieutenant of the Anson, when he commanded that ship in 1747.

† Courteney was a midshipman on board the Fox in Keppel's action. On the trial he proved the time and delivery of Keppel's message to Sir Hugh Palliser. His youthful appearance induced the President to inquire his age before he allowed him to be sworn. He was then sixteen years old, and had had charge of a prize, which he had safely brought into port. Rodney, in a letter to Lady Rodney, says, "I write by Mr. Courteney, who was my first lieutenant in the day of battle, and nephew to my friends, Lord Bute and Mr. M'Kenzie. Pray be civil to him; he is a very fine young man."—Mundy's Life of Rodney, vol. ii. p. 263.

his father) that it was settled to support Sir H. Featherston.

"I am much better to-day, though far from well.

"Sincerely, ever yours,

"KEPPEL."

LORD KEPPEL TO CAPTAIN SIR JOHN JERVIS, K.B.

"Admiralty, June 20th, 1782.

"DEAR SIR JOHN,—Though I do not answer your letters, your hints are taken down, and time must produce the intent of them.

"I hope this dry weather will hasten the recovery of your people. I conclude George Berkeley* communicates my letters to you on the subject of Pégase. I wish much to give her to him. I think he fancies her, so that he would labour to do her justice; and, perhaps, her temper may require great attention. My apprehensions are, that I should, by appointing Berkeley to her, bring all the old officers upon me; yet, if he can bring two or three hundred seamen to her, I should have an answer which

* Captain the Honourable George Berkeley, second son of the Earl of Berkeley, and a nephew of Lord Keppel, was a Lieutenant of the Victory in the action on the 27th of July. The Admiral, as appears from the foregoing letter, was sincerely attached to him, and gave him the command of the Pégase. He died an Admiral and G.C.B. in 1818.

the public would accept of. Does my friend George deceive himself or not when he talks upon the subject of men? Two hundred and fifty good fellows, with his own petty officers from the Recovery, and twenty of her men, would be such a beginning that he would soon have her at sea. I own I have my fears that George cannot get men, however his friends may labour for him.

"I beg my compliments to all friends, and am,

"Dear Jervis,

"Very sincerely, &c.,

"KEPPEL."

LORD KEPPEL TO LORD ROCKINGHAM.

"Admiralty, June 17, 1782.

"MY DEAR MARQUIS,—As I am a stranger to any intentions of Sir Charles Frederick's vacating his seat at Queensborough, I can have but little to observe relative to his successor, but have no doubt, that with the assistance and interest of Rear-Admiral Evans, I am strong enough to carry Sir Robert Harland through, against any distinct interest, even that of the Ordnance, though they should continue trying their ground as I understand they have for some time.

"The Admiralty have done nothing yet re-

garding the appointment and displacing Mr. Jackson, the receiver of the droits of the Admiralty, which the Treasury are possibly expecting us to do. A fresh letter from your Board may serve to stimulate ours.

"I am yet without ability to serve Mr. Rogers, and I have others, both as to abilities and calls upon me, that I must help when I can, but it has so happened that I have had no means to serve one friend attached to me since being in Government. Has the office of Paymaster of Marines been considered? The gift is in the Admiralty, and the post at present in the hands of no friend of mine, or of the present Government, though he would vote with any Government to keep his place.

"I don't intend troubling you with the friends I have hinted at, one excepted, who was my best friend at Windsor, Mr. John Chesshyre, father of four handsome girls, and though not starving, yet in much need of help. He is well known, and is an honest man. A small assistance to him would be very pleasant to me. I know your difficulties, which makes me very reluctant in disturbing you upon matters of this sort.

"I hope you are well. The weather is warm, perhaps too much so for Lady Rockingham. I beg my respects to her. Pray let me know if

you dine at home on Wednesday; if you do, I will endeavour to dine with you.

" Ever yours, my dear Marquis,

" KEPPEL."

Within a fortnight from the date of this letter, Lord Rockingham was no more. He expired on the 1st of July, of a complaint (the hydrothorax) with which he had been for some time afflicted. In him Keppel lost his dearest friend, and the country its warmest and most patriotic supporter.

His character has been well drawn by his friend Burke. The following inscription upon the pedestal of Lord Rockingham's statue, in the Mausoleum at Wentworth, is from his pen:—

" CHARLES, MARQUIS OF ROCKINGHAM,

A statesman, in whom constancy, fidelity, sincerity, and directness were the sole instruments of his policy. His virtues were his arts.

" A clear, sound, unadulterated sense, not perplexed with intricate design, or disturbed by ungoverned passion, gave consistency, dignity, and effect to all his measures. In opposition, he respected the principles of government; in administration, he provided for the liberties of the people. He employed his moments of power in realizing everything which he had proposed in a popular situation. This was the distinguishing mark of his conduct. After twenty-four years of service to the public, in a critical and trying time, he left no debt of just expectation unsatisfied.

" By his prudence and patience he brought together a

party which it was the great object of his labours to render permanent, not as an instrument of ambition, but as a living depository of principle.

"The virtues of his public and private life were not in him of different characters. It was the same feeling, benevolent, liberal mind, which in the internal relations of life, conciliated the unfeigned love of those who see men as they are, which made him an inflexible patriot. He was devoted to the cause of liberty, not because he was haughty and intractable, but because he was beneficent and humane.

"Let his successors, who from this house behold this monument, reflect that their conduct will make it their glory or their reproach. Let them be persuaded that similarity of manners, not proximity of blood, gives them an interest in this statue.

"REMEMBER! RESEMBLE! PERSEVERE!"

It would be superfluous to say how well Lord Rockingham's "successors" have acted in accordance with the advice contained in this inscription.

Around the statue, the busts of his eight dearest friends are placed in niches, in the order in which they are here classed :—

{Admiral Keppel.
C. J. Fox.}
{Sir George Saville.
Edmund Burke.}
{Duke of Portland.
Frederick Montagu.}
{John Lee.
Lord James Cavendish.}

The death of Lord Rockingham was fatal to the administration. Lord Shelburne became his

successor, but the appointment gave such umbrage to the Rockingham party, that they all resigned, with the exception of the Duke of Richmond and Lord Keppel.

By the kindness of the late lamented Lord Holland, the writer has been furnished with the following strictures upon Keppel's retention of office after the retirement of his friends. They are from Horace Walpole's unpublished journal :—

"The point that stuck most with the Duke* was his cousin and friend, Admiral Keppel, whom the zeal of Lord Rockingham and the Cavendishes, on his trial, called on to fulfil his debt of gratitude. To Lord Shelburne he had no obligations ; to the Duke of Richmond, the same as to the Cavendishes. The Duke did prevent the Admiral's immediate resignation ; but he declared he meditated it, and did intend it so much, that he satisfied the Cavendishes ; and they, in their turn, chose to seem satisfied that by maintaining friendship with him, they might preserve opportunities of urging him to resign. This dubious conduct of Keppel led the Duke to profess the same kind of neutral ambiguity. Keppel professed to retain the Admiralty but

* Duke of Richmond.

till the peace; the Duke, the Ordnance, till he should complete his reforms. It would have been improper in Keppel to resign at that moment: he had sent Admiral Pigot to supersede Lord Rodney, who had just obtained a great victory. News had come of the Quebec fleet being taken; had Keppel retired then, he would have opened new ways to his enemies of loading him with obloquy, and given them power to oppress him."

To this extract, Lord Holland obligingly subjoined the following note: — "Walpole calls Keppel's conduct 'dubious,' but his motives were avowed and correct, and he acted up to them. He gave his reasons for not resigning; and his friends who did resign never complained of them; and when those reasons ceased, he followed their example, fulfilled his intentions, and resigned before the termination of Lord Shelburne's ministry. He consequently returned to the Admiralty on the formation of the Coalition Administration in 1783."

Keppel's reasons for continuing in office, after the resignation of his friends, were these:—two Admirals at that time employed, Barrington was one, (the writer is not quite certain of the name of the other,) entertained so low an opinion of the honesty of a Tory government, that they

signified to Lord Keppel their determination to keep their flags flying no longer than he retained office; Barrington (who was second in command at Gibraltar) saying, with professional bluntness, in reference to the party likely to succeed Keppel, "I should not consider my life or honour safe in the hands of such scoundrels!" To avoid the confusion that would arise from the sudden retirement of these officers, Keppel consented to remain until the peace (the preliminaries of which were in the course of signature) was finally arranged.

This account does away with Sir John Barrow's assumption, that "a run having been made in both Houses against the naval administration," Lord Keppel, seeing how matters were likely to go, took the opportunity of retiring from the high and responsible situation he then held at the head of the Admiralty, on the plea that he could not subscribe to the terms of peace"*

It is certainly true that Lord Keppel did not approve of the terms of the peace, but the only effect of his objections was to hasten his resignation a few days. In the debate upon the preliminary articles, Lord Keppel said, "that in a

* Barrow's Life of Howe, p. 164.

late situation which he unworthily filled, he had made it his particular study and care to put the navy of this country upon the most respectable footing. He thought the noble Duke* exaggerated the account of the Spanish navy; it might, indeed, be numerous, but many of their ships were foul. According to some accounts that he (Keppel) had recently received, two or three were careening at the Havannah, and several very much out of condition in other places. The French had still more bad ships than Spain; their navies amounted together to about 123 ships of the line; that of England, to about 109. What the noble Duke had said about the West Indies, had nothing so terrible in it to him. If the ships his Grace had mentioned had chosen to go to the West Indies then, and to make a lodgment of the troops said to be in the island of St. Domingo, they must have come to an engagement, which would have been decisive, and the event of which he should not have feared to have risked. He begged to inform his Grace, that let the French or Spaniards have taken what course they would in the West Indies, or elsewhere, we had force to oppose them, both of ships and men, and that we were

* Duke of Grafton.

ready, at the time alluded to by his Grace, for active war, which was in contemplation. We were fully prepared for either offensive or defensive war. When he computed the navy of England at 109 ships, he included those which would be ready for service by May next. With such a navy as he had described, compared with that of France and Spain, could we be said to have gained that peace which, comparatively, we had a right to expect? No, by no means. He stood in a particular situation, from the office he had lately filled, which, however, he was under the necessity of resigning, because he could not advise his Sovereign to conclude a peace, of which he did not in his conscience approve. We ought to have had a better peace; our situation entitled us to it. We had made an inglorious one, with ten ships of the navy of France in our possession, and they had not at that time one of ours. He mentioned the seven ships taken by Lord Rodney, and three others that had fallen into our hands, all of the line. He reprobated the peace in the strongest terms. He was, unfortunately, an obstinate man, and he had an opinion of his own. It was an opinion, however, neither founded on party, nor slave to interest; it was an opinion he could not give up, because his mind was not convinced that he was

in error. As to the censure conveyed in the amendment, it might probably be wrong; but as to the address, he was confident he ought not to subscribe to it, and therefore he meant to dissent from the noble Earl* who proposed it."

The terms of the peace were, that England should restore the island of St. Lucia, the settlements on the Senegal, and the city of Pondicherry, to the French, and relinquish all claims on Dunkirk. France, on her part, was to give up all her conquests in the West Indies, with the exception of Tobago. Spain was to retain Minorca and West Florida, East Florida being also ceded in exchange for the Bahamas. Holland claimed an indemnification for the expenses of the war, and the restoration of Trincomalee; demands considered so exorbitant that the peace with that country was for a time postponed, though hostilities were suspended.

In the House of Commons, these terms were strongly reprobated; and on the 21st of February, Lord Shelburne, finding the Commons had carried a resolution disapproving of the peace, resigned.

It was some weeks before a new administration could be formed. At length, Mr. Coke† moved an address to the King, begging "he

* The Earl of Pembroke. † The present Earl of Leicester.

would be pleased to form an administration entitled to the confidence of his people." This appears to have hastened matters, for shortly afterwards was formed that compact (of unenviable notoriety, as far as the Whigs were concerned) called the "Coalition" Administration.

In the new cabinet, the Duke of Portland presided at the Treasury, Lord North and Fox became joint Secretaries of State, and Keppel resumed his seat at the Admiralty. As might be expected, this ill-assorted junction of parties did not long hold together. The people viewed it with distrust, and the King made no secret of the aversion with which he regarded it. As a proof of his displeasure, he declared that he would create no peers at its recommendation. Under these circumstances, it is not to be wondered at that it should have lasted but eight months. It has been well said by the biographer of Sheridan, "Its death was worthy of its birth." Fox's India Bill and the prerogative of the Crown effected its overthrow. The India Bill was carried through the Commons by a majority of more than two to one. But by an extraordinary interference of the Sovereign, who said that he should consider any man his enemy who voted for the bill, it was rejected in the House of Lords by a majority of nineteen.

The same night, Keppel had an audience of

the King. He had previously appointed Mr. Adair* to sup with him at ten o'clock. It was past twelve before Keppel returned home. "Why, Admiral," said Adair, "where have you been? Here have I been waiting for my supper these two hours." Keppel replied—"I have been with the King; I thought I should never have got away. His Majesty has been most kind to me; he inquired about our prospects and plans, and treated me with so much openness and honesty, that I entered fully into the state of affairs, with which he seemed highly pleased." "And you believe him?" drily asked Mr. Adair. Keppel felt hurt at the doubt. Adair contented himself with saying—"Well, we shall see." Before they parted, a note arrived from Lord Temple, to inform Lord Keppel that his Majesty had no further occasion for his services. This was one "of those apparent marks of kindness which the King knew so well how to practise."†

Although strongly attached to his party, Lord Keppel allowed neither his political predilections nor his private feelings to influence him in the distribution of official patronage. An instance of this was shewn in the selection he made of the person to fill the office of third in command to

* The late Mr. Alexander Adair, of Pall Mall.

† Nicholls's Recollections, p. 24.

Lord Howe's fleet. He had been repeatedly urged to give this post to one of his early friends, but he resisted all solicitations, and appointed Sir Alexander Hood, because, as he declared, "Hood was the senior admiral of the two, and one of the best officers in his Majesty's service." When Hood's conduct to Keppel, at the time of the court-martial, is remembered, this appointment must be considered as an example at once both of his zeal for the public service and his great placability of temper.*

Another example may be mentioned, in the case of Captain Pellew, afterwards Lord Exmouth, whose family and friends were politically opposed to Keppel. That officer, having greatly distinguished himself, Lord Keppel instantly, and without any previous application, sent him the following letter:—

"Admiralty Office, May 25th, 1782.

"SIR,—I am so well pleased with the account I have received of your gallant and seamanlike conduct in the sloop† you command, in your

* The circumstance was communicated to the writer by Lord Keppel's nephew, the present Sir Robert Adair. Sir John Barrow states, though he does not mention his authority, that it was at Lord Howe's suggestion that Sir Alexander was appointed third in command.

† The Pelican—"a mere shell of a vessel, so low that he (Captain Pellew) would say, his servant could dress his hair from the deck, while he sat in the cabin."—Osler's Life of Viscount Exmouth, p. 56.

spirited attack on three privateers inside the Isle of Bass, and your success in driving them ashore, that I am induced to bestow on you the rank of Post Captain in the service to which your universal good character and conduct do credit; and for this purpose I have named you to the Suffolk, and hope soon to find a frigate for you, as she is promised to a Captain of long standing.

"I am, &c.

"KEPPEL."

Pellew was accordingly promoted, and in June, appointed to the Artois.

Nor did Keppel act with less impartiality in matters where his own family were concerned. His nephew, Captain George Keppel, was in the command of the Hebe, at that time the finest frigate in the navy. Although a good officer in many respects, Captain Keppel was so severe a disciplinarian that few seamen would volunteer for his ship. His uncle, who considered that no quality in an officer could compensate for a want of humanity, dispossessed his relative of the ship, and gave the command of her to Captain, afterwards Sir Edward Thornborough.

The letter which follows relates to an act of patriotism, which may be considered, at the same time, as an indication of the returning con-

fidence of the public in naval affairs, since the transfer of their management into Lord Keppel's hands:—

LORD KEPPEL TO WILLIAM MYDDLETON, ESQ.*

"Admiralty, August 29, 1782.

"SIR,—At the time I received the favour of your letter, I was so particularly employed upon matters of great importance, that I was unable to answer it as fully as the business required. I hope, however, that the delay has not been considered as evading giving my warm approbation upon the spirited and honourable resolution of the meeting at Stowmarket, to build a ship of the line for the public. I cannot enough praise the zeal and noble example the county of Suffolk has shewn to all England. I beg to offer my subscription to you of three hundred pounds towards carrying into execution the undertaking; and, am, Sir,

"Very much your obedient and humble servant,

"KEPPEL."

A still more munificent demonstration of public spirit was made by Sir James Lowther, afterwards Earl of Lonsdale, who presented to the

* He was created a Baronet in 1804, and died on the 26th of Dec. 1830, when he was succeeded by his son, the present Sir William Fowle Myddleton, of Shrubland, Suffolk.

King, through the medium of Lord Keppel, a line-of-battle ship, mounting seventy-four guns, completely manned, rigged, victualled, and fitted for sea, entirely at his own expense.

The five following letters are from the late Lord Holland's collection of MSS. :—

LORD KEPPEL TO MR. FOX.

"June 3, 1783.

"DEAR MR. FOX,—I send you the letters received this morning from Jamaica. By them, you will read that the French have taken the Turks Islands. The Preliminary Articles provide for such events; and by the nineteenth Article it is stipulated that all countries and territories which may have been, or which may be, conquered in any part of the world whatever, not included in the present treaty by either, shall be restored without difficulty and without requiring compensation. I apprehend, however, it may be necessary for you to make the requisition, and, perhaps, to have a specific Article upon this event. You will judge, I am sure, what is most necessary; and I am sincerely,

"Your humble servant,

"KEPPEL.

"When you have read the despatches, I must beg you to send them back, that they may be sent to the King."

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

("*Private.*)

"Bagshot Park, August 10, 1783.

DEAR MR. FOX,—I believe you will have a public letter from the Board of Admiralty, upon the subject of the Empress of Russia's agents employed in London, for the purpose of raising the seamen of this country to serve in the Russian fleet, my information says, at the wages of 3*l.* per month, and bounty money exclusive—that Monsieur De Simolin has frequently many of our seamen crowding to his house. If these facts are as stated, the matter is surely of importance, and fit for the notice of Government upon it; and more especially as, whilst they are enlisting with the Russians, the King's officers are unable to complete the complements of the ships necessarily equipping. I shall be in town on Wednesday, or Thursday at latest. In the meantime,

"Believe me, dear Mr. Fox,

"Sincere humble servant,

"KEPPEL.

"P.S.—I did not see Lord North. After mentioning the impropriety and essential mischief that may be the consequence of the same

consul that left Algiers returning again in that trust, I really believe Mr. Logie, that was at Morocco, would be most agreeable to the Algerines, from the regard they had for a Mr. Logie who was father to this gentleman, and resided there as Swedish consul. I have no friendship, or attachment, to lead my mentioning Lieutenant Logie but believing him most likely to be of public utility." "Yours sincerely,

"KEPPEL."

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

"Admiralty, August 29, 1783.

"DEAR MR. FOX,—Some bustle in the air brought my spasms so bad, that I have not been able to go off for Elden this morning, or even get out of my bed. I trouble you now that Pembroke's transport, the Eloisa, that will be wanted, may be taken from quarantine. Mr. Rogers sends a note to Mr. Faulkener upon it. It is concluded that her crew are in health; and if so, there can be no objection.

"I forgot to acquaint you, yesterday, that Sir John Lindsay had offered his best services for the Mediterranean command, and that the King appeared to be highly pleased with it. No one in the profession could be more proper for such

a trust, in the critical moments likely to require good sense in the Mediterranean Sea. I wish his health may help him through the undertaking. The public will, however, have as much of his service as he can give it. If, during the time I am at Elden, there should be any matter you wish me to be informed of, I must beg you to trouble Mr. Frazier to write me a line.

" Sincerely yours,

" KEPPEL."

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

" Elden, Sept. 6th, 1783.

" DEAR MR. FOX,—I much hope, when I see you in town, where I mean to be on the evening of the 14th, that the Duke of Manchester will have been able to send over to you a conclusion to your unwearied labours; so that you may have some days of liberty and diversion before the Parliament meets. I do not know whether to say there are more or less partridges than usual. I think the turnips require much rain to afford cover to the birds; at present, they make a bad appearance. I have some boys with me who shoot tolerably well; and of their shooting, I desired Bob Jeffs to send you a parcel. I am obliged to be more attentive to my spasmodic complaints than to a more pleasurable employ-

ment, which occasions my giving up my gun entirely. I let it off, the first day of September, twice; since which, I have satisfied myself with being constantly in the air. It is possible I may be better and more animated when I return hither, the first week in October.

"Sincerely yours,

"KEPPEL."

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

"Elden Hall, Sept. 8th, 1783.

"DEAR MR. FOX,—I am much obliged for your communication of the Duke of Manchester having signed, with the French and Spanish Ministers, the definite treaty at Paris, as well as the Dutch treaty being signed. I give you and the Duke of Portland much joy upon it; and I hope you will be able to maintain it, and profit the nation's credit by well-judged steps towards extensive commerce. I shall be happy to see such a system adopted and established, with the Government in your hands, and myself allowed to retire to a life of no business or concern but for my friends doing well.

"I think and hope you will be able to arrange your matters so as to shoot at Elden the second week in October; but, though I flatter myself with your being able to be absent for a few days,

I think we have business of so much importance, which must be settled before you meet Parliament, that will oblige you to be in town a considerable time before that event.

"Sincerely yours, KEPPEL."

Upon the breaking up of the Coalition Administration, Lord Keppel was succeeded in his office by his friend and companion in arms, Lord Howe. From this period, he withdrew entirely from public life. He now retired to his seat in Suffolk; from which place, in July, 1785, he writes to Lady Albemarle:—

"The physicians with whom I advise, judge it necessary for me to pass my next winter abroad, and I have acquiesced. Their observation of my constitution leads them to be of opinion that the summers in this country are not long enough, and have not, hitherto, strengthened me sufficiently to enable me to support myself under the attack of a severe winter: in this I agree with them. It is from their reasoning that I submit to visiting a foreign country; no ways from any expectation of passing my time at Naples (the place of my intended winter residence) much to my amusement. My daughter* goes with me; and, if Lord Howe is

* Miss Keppel married General Meyrick, descended from the ancient family of the Meyricks, of Bôdorgan, and had one son, the present Colonel Meyrick.

able to assist me, I mean to embark on board a frigate, and perform my journey by water; for which purpose I shall endeavour to get to Portsmouth the 14th of September, on board the 15th, and sail as soon after as the weather permits."

Shortly after the date of this letter, Lord Keppel went to Portsmouth and embarked for Naples. He returned to England in the spring of 1786, when he again took up his residence at Elden.

"In his retirement," says Campbell, "he continued to display, with unaffected cheerfulness, though harassed with severe bodily infirmities, those many amiable qualities with which he was so largely endowed, and, in the society of his private friends, he gave and received that pure pleasure which flows from the cordial sympathies of real esteem."*

In the autumn of this year, Margaret Nicholson, the maniac, made an attempt upon the life of George the Third. Lord Keppel was anxious to appear at Court to testify his gratification that the King had escaped assassination, but he was too unwell to do so. He wrote, however, to the Groom of the Stole, from whom he received the following reply:—

* Campbell's Naval History, vol. vi. p. 183.

THE MARQUESS OF CARMARTHEN TO LORD KEPPEL.

"Whitehall, August 18th, 1786.

"My dear Lord,—I did not omit mentioning to their Majesties the reason which prevented your Lordship coming to Court. The King and Queen both expressed their concern at the cause of your absence in the most gracious manner. I sincerely hope your Lordship will find benefit from the country air, and am ever,

"My dear Lord, your Lordship's

"Most faithful and obedient servant,

"Carmarthen."

Lord Keppel's strength now rapidly failed him. His constitution had been long impaired; indeed, the seeds of disease may be said to have been sown at the very outset of his career, by the extraordinary hardships he endured in his voyage with Anson, and to this primary cause may be added that pestilential fever caught at the Havannah, which had carried off thousands of his comrades, accelerated the death of both his brothers, and from which, according to Hervey, not one of the survivors of that dearly-purchased conquest ever ultimately recovered.

His friends appear to have been unconscious that his earthly career was so near its close, though, by an arrangement which he made, by the advice of the Duke of Portland, in the dis-

position of his property, three days before his death, he shewed that he himself was aware of his situation.

He expired on the 2nd of October, 1786, in the sixty-third year of his age.

The character of one so constantly engaged in the service of his country as Lord Keppel, is comprised in the pages which record his actions. A brief notice of his personal qualities and opinions will be all, therefore, that is requisite, in conclusion, from his biographer.

The epithet "little" fondly given by the sailors to Keppel, denotes him to have been low of stature. In his early manhood, a blow received from the butt-end of a pistol, in a scuffle with foot-pads, fractured the bridge of his nose. His face, by this accident, was seriously and permanently disfigured; yet the fascination of his smile, and the lively and benevolent expression of his eyes, redeemed the countenance from extreme plainness. The "hereditary charm" of his demeanour has been mentioned already. It combined a professional honesty and frankness with the ease and simplicity of address which, if not altogether acquired, are certainly confirmed and perfected by intercourse with the best society. His popularity with all classes appeared not only at his trial, but in the esteem with which both those under whom he served, and those whom

he commanded at all times regarded him; in the zealous affection of his friends, and in the enforced respect of his political opponents.

The political opinions of Keppel were inherited from ancestors who for centuries had been citizens of a free state, and whose descendants shared in our own revolution of 1688. Reason and experience confirmed these sentiments in him; and he was, throughout his life, the steady and fearless supporter of civil and religious freedom, even when an opposite course, or neutrality alone, would have smoothed and accelerated his professional advancement. His darling object was, active employment; yet, when required to serve against his unrepresented brethren on the opposite shores of the Atlantic, Keppel courted neglect and misrepresentation rather than lend his services to a cause which his feelings and his principles equally disapproved. In his numerous encounters with the enemy, we find him, while, in a subordinate station, distinguished for his gallantry and his nautical science; for sagacity in comprehending, for promptness in executing his orders; and when in superior command, successful on every occasion except the indecisive action of the 27th of July. How far the result of that day was attributable to Keppel, as well as of the circumstances which caused the exception, the foregoing pages will, perhaps,

have enabled the reader to judge. As a member of the legislature he made no pretensions to eloquence, or even to political eminence. Yet, on all subjects connected with his profession, he was listened to with attention, and distinguished for the impartiality of his representations, and the practical wisdom of his opinions. His letters exhibit similar features of character. On all public questions they display, without effort or pretence, a generous ardour, comprehensive views, and an active and temperate mind. And where they relate to his personal friendships and connexions, they reflect an ingenuous and affectionate nature which neither success nor disappointment could disturb.

"Lord Keppel," says Charnock, "was the idol of all parties and ranks, whether in or out of the service; his bravery, his prudence, his activity, his diligence, he had happily afforded reiterated proofs of; a frankness of disposition, an affability, that trait of character usually distinguished by the appellation of good humour, had acquired him, among the seamen, a degree of love bordering almost on adoration."*

In the "Naval Biography," published in 1839, he is stated to have obtained "the unbounded love of the seamen." An anonymous

* Charnock's Biographia Navalis, vol. v. pp. 345, 6.

writer, at the time of his death, says, "that on every occasion he proved himself the friend of the meritorious, and the seaman's protector; and that no officer in the service possessed the love of the navy equal to himself."* The most celebrated sketch of Lord Keppel is from the pen of one who knew him well—Edmund Burke: it is contained in the well-known letter to Francis, Duke of Bedford. The language of the panegyric is peculiar to the crisis in which it was written, and to the temperament and position of the great orator from whom it emanated. We shall content ourselves, therefore, with extracting from it such portions only as either belong to general history or are essential to the present memoir.

"It was but the other day that, in putting in order some things which had been brought here on my taking leave of London for ever, I looked over a number of fine portraits, most of them of persons now dead, but whose society, in my better days, made this a proud and happy place. Amongst these was the picture of Lord Keppel. It was painted by an artist worthy of the subject,† the excellent friend of that excellent man from their earliest youth, and a common friend of us both, with whom we lived for many years without a moment of coldness, of peevishness,

* Quoted by Charnock, vol. v. p. 346.

† Sir Joshua Reynolds.

of jealousy, or of jar, to the day of our final separation.

" I ever looked on Lord Keppel as one of the greatest and best men of his age, and I loved and cultivated him accordingly. He was much in my heart, and I believe I was in his to the very last beat. It was after his trial at Portsmouth that he gave me this picture. With what zeal and anxious affection I attended him through that his agony of glory; what part my son in the early flush and enthusiasm of his virtue, and the pious passion with which he attached himself to all my connexions; with what prodigality we both squandered ourselves in courting almost every sort of enmity for his sake. I believe he felt just as I should have felt such friendship, on such an occasion. I partook, indeed, of this honour, with several of the first and best and ablest in the kingdom; but I was behindhand with none of them, and I am sure that if, to the eternal disgrace of this nation, and to the total annihilation of every trace of honour and virtue in it, things had taken a different turn from what they did, I should have attended him to the quarter-deck with no less good-will and more pride, though with far other feelings, than I partook of the general flow of national joy that attended the justice that was done to his virtue."

"Lord Keppel had two countries—one of descent and one of birth. Their interests and their glory are the same, and his mind was capacious of both. His family was noble, and it was Dutch—that is, he was of the oldest and purest nobility that Europe can boast; among a people renowned above all others for love of their native land. Though it was never shewn in insult to any human being, Lord Keppel was something high. It was a wild stock of pride, on which the tenderest of all hearts had grafted the milder virtues. He valued ancient nobility, and he was not disinclined to augment it with new honours. He valued the old nobility and the new; not as an excuse for inglorious sloth, but as an incitement to virtuous activity. He considered it as a sort of cure for selfishness and a narrow mind; conceiving that a man born in an elevated place in himself was nothing, but everything in what went before and what was to come after him. Without much speculation, but by the sure instinct of ingenuous feelings, and by the dictates of plain, unsophisticated, natural understanding, he felt that no great commonwealth could by any possibility long subsist without a body of some kind or other of nobility, decorated with honour, and fortified by privilege. This nobility forms the chain that connects the ages of a nation which otherwise

GENEALOGY OF AUGUSTUS, VISCOUNT KEPPEL.

Wolter van Keppel,
Lord of Keppel,
fl. 1179 – 1231.

Derek van Keppel,
Lord of Keppel.

Wolter van Keppel,
held the Lordship of Verwolde,
under his elder brother, Derek.

Derek van Keppel, Lord of Verwolde,
† 1326.

Derek van Keppel, Lord of Verwolde.
m: —— van Roode van Heekeren.
† 1414.

Wolter van Keppel, Lord of Verwolde.
m: Wichmoert van Ittersum.
† 1488.

Cunigunda van Heekeren = *Derek van Keppel, Lord of Verwolde* = *Joanna vander Wolbeek,*
first wife. *† 1539* *heiress of Wolbeck,*
second wife.

(1) *Frederick van Keppel*
Lord of Verwolde.
m: Katherine Grubben.

Cunigunda van Keppel,
heiress of Verwolde,
m: Alert van Hieften.

(2) *Joachim van Keppel, Lord of Wolbeck.*
m: Angelina van Loon.
† 1584.

Derek van Keppel,
Lord of Wolbeck,
m: Addaide vander Voorst,
heiress of the Voorst.
† 1589.

George van Keppel,
ancestor of
the Keppels of
Oldwick, Mallum,
and Campferbeck.

Herman van Keppel
ancestor of
the Keppels of
Molecaten.

(1) *Everard van Keppel*
Lord of Wolbeck,
whose posterity still
reside there.

(2) *Oswald van Keppel, Lord of Voorst,*
m: Matilda vander Capellen,
† 1621.

Derek van Keppel, Lord of Voorst,
m: Theodora van Salland,
† 1646.

Oswald van Keppel, Lord of Voorst,
m: Reniera van Lintelor.
† 1685.

Arnold Joost van Keppel, Lord of Voorst,
1st Earl of Albemarle, K.G.
m: Gertrude van S. Gravemoer.
† 1718.

William Anne, 2nd Earl of Albemarle, K.G.
m: Lady Anne Lennox,
† 1754.

George, 3rd Earl of
Albemarle, K.G.
† 1772.

AUGUSTUS, VISCOUNT KEPPEL,
b 1725. † 1786.

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would soon be taught that no one generation can bind another. He felt that no political fabric could be well made without some such order of things as might, through a series of time, afford a rational hope of securing unity, coherence, consistency, and stability to the state. He felt that nothing else can protect it against the levity of courts, and the greater levity of the multitude."*

It is needless to pursue the quotation further; yet the panegyric contains an assumption which a biographer must not pass over in silence. In the latter pages of the "Letter to a Noble Lord," the eulogist labours to convince the Duke of Bedford that his deceased uncle, Lord Keppel, would not have supported the Whigs in their efforts to establish a peace with those whom he calls the "Regicides of France." But of all men of his time, Burke was, perhaps, the least qualified to pronounce what would have been the conduct or the sentiments of another at a crisis, which, like the close of the last century, confounded the ordinary distinctions of party. In that philosophic intuition which discerns the moral of the past, and the unembodied form of the future, Burke had no equal in his own, no superior in any former age; but

* See Burke's Works, vol. vii., from p. 433 to 437.

in practical statesmanship he had neither the intense sagacity of Chatham, nor the intrepid vigour of Fox. The sterling virtues, the manly sense, which Burke describes as the characteristics of his departed friend, were more likely to have resisted, than to have embraced, his splendid, but frequently unreasonable, denunciations; and the examples of Fox and Erskine, were at least as powerful with their contemporaries, as the more eccentric and passionate course of the great seceder from the Whigs. It is more probable that the calm and candid temper of Keppel, while it recoiled from the atrocities of the "Reign of Terror," would have read in the excesses of men newly emancipated, the condemnation of the system which had debased them; and that the same temper, confirmed by his previous habits of obedience and command, would have encouraged in him the faith that; from the chaos of revolution, new elements of order would arise, and eventually develop themselves in a government based on the sole legitimate source of power—the consent of the governed.

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